The Complete PROSE of
T. S. Eliot
The Critical Edition
VOLUME 6
The War Years, 1940–1946

edited by

DAVID E. CHINITZ &

RONALD SCHUCHARD

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The COMPLETE PROSE *of*

T. S. Eliot

RONALD SCHUCHARD, *General Editor*

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THE CRITICAL EDITION

VOLUME 6: *The War Years, 1940-1946*

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THE WAR YEARS, 1940-1946
Introduction

In the early morning of 23 June 1944, a German V-1 flying bomb fell in the middle of Russell Square, injuring no one but blowing out the windows and doors in the offices of Faber & Faber and hurling the ceiling down to the floor. Air Raid Warden Thomas Stearns Eliot, who spent one night a week spotting fires from the roof of the building, was not on duty that night; if he had been, this would be, very likely, a considerably shorter book. Eliot, fortunately, would survive the ordeal of World War II. And this volume, as it stands, offers a richly varied collection representing his response to the extraordinary pressures of total war. Much of the work included here was composed under circumstances or for purposes dictated by the war. And just as it underlies *East Coker*, *The Dry Salvages*, and *Little Gidding* in important ways even when they are not talking directly about it, the war remains the grim background for Eliot's prose of this period whether he is writing on the ballet, the book trade, Kipling, Poland, or Poe.

The first part of this volume includes 129 works under the heading "Essays, Reviews, Addresses, and Public Letters." It is a sign of Eliot's cresting reputation as a figure of cultural significance and of his consequent value as a speaker that fully a quarter of these works were written as lectures or radio broadcasts. Eliot accorded no less value to these pieces originally created to be spoken rather than read; in fact, of the seven prose works from this period that he would later collect in *On Poetry and Poets*, only one did *not* originate as a public lecture. Freed from the obligation to write commentaries and reviews for the *Criterion*, which he had shuttered in 1939, he was able to distribute his attention more widely – a fact that may help to account for the thirty-two letters he fired off to the editors of various periodicals during these years. The remaining items in Part I are exceptionally diverse generically, including not only the headlined essays, reviews, and addresses, but nine prefaces and introductions, five newsletters composed wholly by Eliot, three autobiographical documents, a controversial pamphlet, a telegram, an advertisement, a wry social comment in the form of a limerick, and one article written as cultural propaganda for a magazine air-dropped into occupied France by the Royal Air Force. Five more are position papers, three of these written for the Moot, a discussion group on culture, society, and Christianity organized in 1938 by J. H. Oldham that stimulated a good deal of Eliot's thought in these years, including a series of essays and lectures, included here, that would develop into *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948).

It should be mentioned, too, that twenty-seven of the works printed in Part I of this volume were unpublished in Eliot's lifetime, and twenty-six of those are presented here for the first time.[1] In addition to this wealth of new material, a further twenty published works that were unrecorded in Donald Gallup's bibliography are likely to be unfamiliar to most of Eliot's readers. Part II comprises transcripts and summary reports by others of four lectures for which Eliot's original text is lost; Part III includes fifteen letters and documents of which Eliot is one of several signatories. None of the items in these latter sections of the volume is catalogued by Gallup; one was previously unpublished.

I

The effects of the war on Eliot's literary life mounted rapidly once the Wehrmacht began its westward push in May 1940. Only days before Eliot was to embark on a two-week lecture tour in Italy, the British Council called off the plan out of fear for his safety. (In the end, Italy would declare war on France and Britain on 10 June, the day Eliot was to have returned to England.) In July, the annual Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology, in which Eliot was to serve as a lecturer, was postponed due to the German invasion of Great Britain that was regarded as imminent in the aftermath of the Dunkirk evacuation and the fall of France. Beginning in September, the eight-month aerial Blitz annihilated lives and livelihoods throughout London. Citizens were urged to "Keep Calm and Carry On," and Eliot strove to do just that at Faber & Faber. "Unless anything has happened since Friday," he wrote to John Hayward on 22 October, "F. &. F. have not been bombed out. Every week produces a fresh deposit of time bombs or aerial torpedoes or land mines in the vicinity, but so far, I hope to attend the Wednesday committee tomorrow as usual." On one occasion, the office was evacuated as an unexploded bomb was defused in Russell Square. The firm's business was curtailed in more quotidian ways as well, as a strictly rationed paper supply restricted the output of British publishers.

In early July 1940, Eliot volunteered as a warden in the Air Raid Precautions program, and he was trained to fulfill such duties as clearing the streets during a raid, directing people to the air raid shelters, putting out fires, and assisting civilian casualties.[2] For two nights each week he patrolled the streets of South Kensington – his "sector" was the area west of Gloucester Road, between Cornwall Gardens and Cromwell Road – enforcing the mandatory blackout (to deprive enemy bombers of easy targets) and responding to any incidents. His beat was his own neighborhood, where he had been living at 11 Emperor's Gate since 1937 as a tenant of his pastor, Fr. Eric Cheetham. After a month of the Blitz, however, Eliot found living in London unendurable.[3] He put his furnishings in storage and relocated to the home of Mrs. Lina Mirrlees – the mother of his friend the poet Hope Mirrlees – in Shamley Green, near Guildford, Surrey. Eliot lodged there for the duration of the war, commuting 60 km (38 miles) to London, where he generally stayed three days each week to attend to his business obligations. While in London he kept, at first, a two-night vigil as a fire watcher on the roof of the Faber building in Bloomsbury, spotting fires resulting from enemy bombing. The resulting exhaustion took a steady toll on Eliot's health. In time he would limit his fire-watching to one night per week.

The end of the Blitz in May 1941 brought some relief, but it did not mean the end of London's trials, nor of the disruptions to Eliot's life. Periodic air raids continued. In February 1944, amid a five-month series of German sorties popularly known as the "Baby Blitz," bomb damage closed both Eliot's club, the Oxford and Cambridge, and his beloved London Library. While fire-watching with Eliot in mid-March, his friend Morley Kennerley lost his home to the Luftwaffe. The flying bomb that exploded in Russell Square on 23 June badly damaged not only the Faber offices but also a company flat that Eliot had been using for his overnight stays in the city. Not even in Surrey, though, did he altogether escape the "buzz bombs." One passed directly over Mrs. Mirrlees's house in Shamley Green, landing on the grounds of a nearby seminary, and Eliot reported to Mary Trevelyan on 24 June that the house was "shaken several times a night" by their blasts. He added, at once candidly and humorously:

> I suppose I'm as frightened as most people. . . . If one is also of a worrying disposition, as I am, one worries about all the possible consequences short of death, even the more trivial ones like how one is to get any clothes, or carry out an important engagement with nothing but a shirt and trousers. But there is something else which I can't get to the bottom of, disgust, horror, physical nausea, the nightmare of evil.

The flying bomb attacks continued through the summer. Soon after they stopped in the early fall, V-2 rockets began to target England.

From the "nightmare of evil" and the menace of bombing, Eliot had much to distract him. He still had his publishing work to do, and much more besides. To please allies, to court neutrals, and to combat Nazi claims of cultural superiority, the British Council called on him to give lectures to groups of foreign nationals in London and even sent him abroad to lecture. The BBC asked Eliot to broadcast frequently on literary and cultural topics, beaming his voice where he himself could not go. He sent contributions to periodicals in such countries as Portugal, Sweden, Russia, and Morocco; he wrote for Free French magazines based in London. He took leadership roles in several organizations, standing as president of the Classical Association in 1941-42; of the Virgil Society, which he helped to found, in 1943-44; and of the English Circle (i.e., chapter) of Books Across the Sea – a group dedicated to strengthening the alliance between Britain and the United States through the sharing of books – from 1943 until it was absorbed into the English-Speaking Union in 1947. He continued to participate regularly, as he had since 1934, in Maurice Reckitt's Chandos group, pursuing Christian sociology, and in the Moot. From 1941 he served on the Joint Standing Committee of Religion and Life and the Sword of the Spirit, which coordinated the activities of two Christian organizations – one Anglican and Protestant, the other Roman Catholic – in their shared objectives of supporting the war effort and promoting Christian social values. From 1943 he was on the governing committee of St. Anne's Church House (the church itself had been destroyed in the Blitz), a center for religious and cultural instruction, lectures, and discussion groups, some of which Eliot himself led or organized. When called upon in 1944 and 1945 to speak at the Churchill Club for the benefit of American service personnel, Eliot did his duty, giving lectures to the soldiers on Whitman, Milton, and Poe. His letters chronicle the numerous obligations he took on in these years:

> But at present I confess I find every obstacle in the way of thinking continuously about any one subject: one is here perpetually pestered with one small war job after another – I call a "war job" any job which one only undertakes because of the war – little articles for Allied periodicals, talking to soldiers (American and Allies), presiding over "Books Across the Sea" (there will be an exhibition of American children's scrap books

> to be opened week after next) and occasionally jobs for the British Council (including some for which I have to prepare but which don't come off).[4]

Nor had his old obligations lapsed. He continued to serve on the editorial boards of the *New English Weekly*, as he had since 1934, and of Oldham's *Christian News-Letter*, founded in 1939. On five occasions Eliot authored the newsletter himself to give Oldham the opportunity to take a vacation. No wonder he would end a letter to Hayward – after another chronicle of his activities – by signing himself "Your obliged and obligated friend."[5]

Eliot sometimes blamed himself for being unable to say no, as when he confessed to George Orwell that he was "annoyed" for having allowed himself to be drawn into the project of founding the Virgil Society.[6] He saw the value, certainly, in such activities, yet he considered them departures from the central projects of his life, which he still associated with writing and publishing. In an unpublished 1946 autobiographical document, he mentions his interests in Christian sociology and political philosophy but adds: "My chief function is to write verse, and verse plays, and to publish the poetry of other writers: everything else I do is a *Nebenfach*" – that is, an ancillary study (6.699). Yet his wartime pursuits did little to impede his activity as a critic. Such major works as his Yeats, Kipling, and Johnson essays, "The Music of Poetry," "The Social Function of Poetry," "What Is a Classic?," "What Is Minor Poetry?," and "The Classics and the Man of Letters" – all of which would eventually be collected in *On Poetry and Poets* and *To Criticize the Critic* – were composed during the war, as were several essays that would soon be absorbed into *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*.[7]

II

At a moment in his life when, to a considerable degree, Eliot's time was not his own, it seems natural that the concept of responsibility should be a frequent theme in his writing. He approached the topic from various angles in essays with such titles as "Responsibility and Power," "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe," and "Full Employment and the Responsibility of Christians," and elsewhere. He wrote on this subject in the context of a lively national conversation looking ahead to life after the war that was taking place in Britain from almost the moment war was declared. From J. B. Priestley's popular BBC broadcasts to articles written by leading British prelates, friends like Oldham and Karl Mannheim, and many others, much of the discussion around Eliot had to do with responsibility in international relations and, even more strikingly, in social relations. Eliot reveals a perhaps surprising sympathy for the argument, made most famously by Priestley, that to fight the Axis effectively Britain needed to take inspiration from a vision of a better world to come after the war. The "new order of society" that the socialist Priestley envisioned was not exactly Eliot's ideal, yet Eliot could argue similarly, in *The Christian News-Letter*:

> The organisation of industry and of finance, of agriculture, of education, must all, under pressure of hard circumstance, be radically modified: the sum and interaction of intelligent adaptations, if animated by a common spirit of patriotism, prudence and adventure, is what will create the civilisation of the future. The necessity makes the opportunity; and it is our business . . . not to think of "the new world" as something to be deferred until after the war, but to conduct the war in such a way as to prepare it – for the very changes we ought to make in order to win the war can help to prepare the "new world" after it. (6.106)

Eliot's unique contribution to the conversation on responsibility lay in a certain combination of interests that would culminate in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, but also in an important argument about the social responsibility of writers that found its most distinguished expression in "The Social Function of Poetry."[8]

Eliot claims in that essay that the effects of poetry extend far beyond the reader: they "actually make a difference to the society as a whole, and that means to people who do not enjoy poetry" (6.439). Poetry remains the art "most indissoluble from its language" and therefore the one that gives the purest expression to and exerts the most telling influence upon a culture. The poet's direct responsibility, therefore, is to the *language*,

> first to preserve, and second to extend and improve. In expressing what other people feel he is also changing the feeling by making it more conscious; he is making people aware of what they feel already, and therefore teaching them something about themselves. . . . For our language goes on changing; our way of life changes, under the pressure of material changes in our environment in all sorts of ways; and unless we have those few men who combine an exceptional sensibility with an exceptional

> power over words, our own ability, not merely to express, but even to feel any but the crudest emotions, will degenerate. (6.441)

The influence of the poets, Eliot argues, expands centrifugally from its relatively small circle of readers: "The changes and developments of sensibility which appear first in a few, will work themselves into the language gradually, through their influence on other, and more readily popular authors" (6.442). And so, "in the long run, [poetry] makes a difference to the speech, to the sensibility, to the lives of all the members of a society, to all the members of the community, to the whole people, whether they read and enjoy poetry or not. . . . And this is what I mean by the social function of poetry in its largest sense" (6.442-43). This rather bracing argument assigned the poet – and, with a slight loosening of interpretation, the literary critic – a serious and important responsibility. Eliot's emphasis on the writer's responsibility to language, and his faith in the social effects of that charge, helped put the final seal on his eminence in critical prose while *Four Quartets* was doing the same for his eminence in poetry.[9]

Although agreement among writers on political matters is unattainable, Eliot considers that there are "matters of public concern, in which the man of letters should express his opinion, and exert his influence, not merely as a citizen but as a man of letters: and upon such matters I think that it is desirable that men of letters should agree" (6.520). Responsibility with respect to these issues lies neither in ignoring politics nor in precipitating oneself into politics; one should, rather,

> be vigilantly watching the conduct of politicians and economists, for the purpose of criticising and warning, when the decisions and actions of politicians and economists are likely to have cultural consequences. . . . Of the possible cultural consequences of their activities, politicians and economists are usually oblivious; the man of letters is better qualified to foresee them, and to perceive their seriousness. (6.524)

From that perspective, Eliot expresses concerns about curtailments of artistic freedom, such as state censorship, about the limited efficacy of governmental cultural programs, and about the conscription of cultural production to national propaganda – a danger particularly clear in wartime. He admits that propaganda is necessary but warns that writers must resist becoming, "in their professional capacity, servants of the state" (6.525).

Eliot distills these ideas splendidly in "The Responsibility of the European Man of Letters," a 1944 BBC talk. This "wee broadcast," as Eliot called it, takes the concept of artistic responsibility developed in "The Social Function of Poetry" as a premise and goes on to delineate three points:

> The first of these is that the writer should always be in a certain sense in opposition. He should be jealous to preserve the tradition of the culture of his people and of Europe; but in so doing he must find himself constantly opposed to current tendencies and to popular values. So much great literature is, in one aspect, a criticism, and often a severe criticism, of the society in which the author lived, that, if the man of letters is not to criticize he must be silent; therefore we must maintain our right to freedom of speech. The second principle which I have in mind is the preservation of the tradition of humanism in education, which we, as Europeans, derive in common from Rome, Greece and Israel. The third is the restoration of the unity in variety of Europe. No political structure can guarantee this; any political structure may, in practice, disturb the balance of it. Cultural isolation, and cultural uniformity, are both the enemies of culture. And just as each of our countries, when it is in health, is a unity of local cultures in a national culture; so Europe, if it is to recover health, must be a unity of diverse nations in a European culture. (6.542)

These points – the writer in opposition, the preservation of the humanist tradition, and unity in variety – anticipate central themes developed in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. Although the first idea, the responsibility of the writer to be "always in opposition," is one not often associated with Eliot, he speaks repeatedly, in and around this period, of the importance of social conflict. In "Responsibility and Power" (1943), he envisages a healthy society as one maintaining a balance among multiple contingencies – the judiciary, the military, businesses, the common people, the press, and so forth – and he writes, "in an active society, we must expect each centre of power to claim rather more than is appropriate to it, and the balance to be preserved by a wholesome contest" (6.486). This concept will be extended in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*: "within limits, the friction, not only between individuals but between groups, seems to me quite necessary for civilization. The universality of irritation is the best assurance of peace." Opposition, for Eliot, is crucial: "One needs the enemy," he memorably declares (*NTDC* 59). In his radio script, Eliot casts the "man of letters" as the cultural enemy, out of key with his time, ever struggling with the present and keen to preserve continuity with the past. His sharp logical turn from this idea to the imperative of free speech is breathtaking.

Three days after the Allies had declared victory in Europe, Paul Valéry told Eliot, "*L'Europe est finie*" – Europe is finished. Eliot's unwillingness to acquiesce speaks again to his sense of responsibility: "as we must continue to act and to speak, continue to protest against stupidity and evil and to applaud intelligence and excellence, we must continue to behave on the assumption that it is not true" (6.754). The recovery of the cultural health of Europe is a subject to which he frequently recurred. For Eliot, restoring the unity-in-diversity of Europe involves renewing a dynamic of cultural commerce that he contrasts with the trade of goods:

> There are still people who believe that the prosperity of a country depends upon exporting as much and importing as little as possible. . . . But cultural relations have their own laws. One of them is that every country needs to import as well as to export; that every country needs to know the best thought, art and science of other countries in order to maintain and to develop its own. The history of European civilisation is a history of perpetual cross-fertilisation. (6.422)

Writers must both participate in that process and advocate for it, criticizing misguided policies and common misapprehensions that impede it, including an excessive faith in the idea that cultural cross-fertilization is an ancillary function of politics. The efforts of individual writers to get to know one another other and of energetic private associations (such as Books Across the Sea) to facilitate cultural exchange are at least as important as the efforts of governments to orchestrate it: "Cultural relations between countries without relations between the right individuals are very shallow; the relations between a gigantic deputation and a gigantic reception committee which entertains it at dinner are not what really count unless they lead to something more personal" (6.423). For this reason Eliot concludes that "it is the business of the State to facilitate, to assist, rather than to direct, the cultural relations of nations. There is no substitute for the communication between person and person" (6.425).

Crucial for Eliot, as his repeated references to "Rome, Greece and Israel" suggest, is the conviction "that a new unity can only grow on the old roots: the Christian Faith, and the classical languages which Europeans inherit in common" (6.308). In a series of postwar broadcasts to Germany, he argues:

> this unity in the common elements of culture, throughout many centuries, is the true bond between us. No political and economic organisation, however much goodwill it commands, can supply what this culture [*sic*] unity gives. If we dissipate or throw away our common patrimony of culture, then all the organisation and planning of the most ingenious minds will not help us, or bring us closer together. (6.719)

The preservation of this common heritage, Eliot believes, is one of the shared duties of European "men of letters": "In a world which has seen such material devastation as ours, these spiritual possessions are also in imminent peril" (6.720).

Conscious of the need to bring the Axis powers back into the European cultural fold, Eliot chose his words carefully when given the opportunity to broadcast over the BBC's European Service on the occasion of the fall of Rome to the Allies. Forgoing any note of triumph, he chose to focus graciously on "the debt of all European peoples to Rome":

> it is not of our several debts that I wish to remind you, but of our common debt. It is the formation given us in the past, the tradition of Latin culture which we have in common, together with our common religion, that created the European consciousness, the common mind in which we are Europeans. If the claims of this cultural kinship, which is Europe, and this spiritual kinship, which is Christendom, are to be respected; if the mutual bonds which have been forgotten in peace, before they were broken in war, are to be re-affirmed; we must not only acknowledge our debt to Rome in the past, but maintain and multiply it in the future. (6.508)

Closing with a reference to Virgilian "piety," Eliot suggests that Europeans owe such piety to Rome itself, for "to Rome we owe the fact that we are Europeans." He cannot say quite the same in his postwar broadcasts to Germany, but he follows a similar strategy, moving past the recent conflict to emphasize the common history and culture of Europe. Yet he also takes Naziism to task precisely for the ways in which it undermined the idea of a European culture: "The confusion of culture and politics . . . may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or to remould, every culture surrounding it. An error of the Germany of Hitler was to assume that every other culture than that of Germany was either decadent or barbaric. Let us have an end of such assumptions" (6.716).

III

The loss of friends and eminent acquaintances is reflected in a number of obituaries and appreciations Eliot published during and shortly after the war. When the novelist Hugh Walpole passed away in 1941, Eliot responded to a tepid *Times* obituary by recalling Walpole's "capacity to appreciate and admire generously the work of authors very different from himself" (6.173). Walpole had been an early supporter of the *Criterion* and had written a strong letter backing Eliot's appointment to the board of Faber & Gwyer; Eliot now repaid his debt in a warm testament to the older writer's kindness. The unexpected loss of Charles Williams in 1945 hit Eliot harder, for Williams was "a loved friend as well as an author whose work I very much admired and which, I feel, has never yet received its due appreciation."[10] He accepted a request from the *Times* to write Williams's obituary (6.623) and followed up a year later with a radio broadcast on "The Significance of Charles Williams," expanding his earlier comments on Williams's character and presenting a fuller consideration of his art (6.772). Eliot was also moved to write an obituary in 1946 for John Maynard Keynes, with whom he had maintained a friendly relationship since the 1920s. Published in the *New English Weekly*, Eliot's essay attempts to delineate the unique brilliance of mind for which the famous economist was praised in many public tributes. "No man could have had greater advantages of background, education and environment," Eliot concluded, and "no one, having these advantages, could have turned them to better account, or cultivated to a richer harvest the field which he was given to till" (6.751).

The most devastating loss for Eliot, however, was that of Virginia Woolf to suicide on 28 March 1941. "For myself and others it is the end of a world," he wrote to Leonard Woolf on 4 April, on first hearing the news. He told John Hayward on 21 April that the course of the war (including the Blitz) and Woolf's death "have combined to depress me – the last more perhaps than I was aware of at the time." Woolf, he said, had "always seemed to me like a kind of member of my own family." He would have preferred to mourn her in private but reluctantly agreed to write a note for the journal *Horizon*, though he predicted that the result would please no one.[11] Eliot's decision not to elaborate on his "desolation" at Woolf's death – such feelings, he wrote, "one keeps to oneself" (6.169) – is the main reason for the note's peculiar tone (Herbert Read would recall later that it "shocked us all by its chilly detachment").[12] He focuses instead on the end-of-a-world sense first mentioned in his note to Leonard – a sense that it was not only a friend and an artist that had passed, but a cultural moment:

> Virginia Woolf was the centre, not merely of an esoteric group, but of the literary life of London. Her position was due to a concurrence of qualities and circumstances which never happened before, and which I do not think will ever happen again. . . . With the death of Virginia Woolf, a whole pattern of culture is broken: she may be, from one point of view, only the symbol of it; but she would not be the symbol if she had not been, more than anyone in her time, the maintainer of it. (6.171)

Or, as he expressed it in his letter to Hayward, "a kind of pin has gone which held a lot of people together, and gave their belonging together a pattern and a meaning which has gone. They now become only separate individuals." Looking toward the future, Eliot saw himself "becoming a ghost in an alien, plebeian and formless society." His obituary for Woolf ends by quoting Charles Péguy: "*On sait ce que l'on perd. On ne sait jamais ce que l'on rattrapera*": "We know what we have lost; we never know what we will get in its place" (6.171). He would recall the same passage in the telegram he sent the journal *Les Lettres françaises* after the death of Valéry in 1945 – a death that, as we have seen, was connected in Eliot's mind with concerns about the future of Europe. The melancholy sense voiced in his wartime prose of not only personal but cultural loss – and of a felt responsibility to press on in spite of it – finds parallel expression throughout his wartime *Quartets*. "As we grow older," Eliot writes in *East Coker*, "The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated / Of dead and living" (*CPP* 129; *Poems1* 191).

Contributing to Eliot's perception that a cultural world – *his* world – was coming to an end was, certainly, the loss of two major Irish modernists, W. B. Yeats in 1939 and James Joyce in 1941. Eliot commemorated Yeats in a memorial address given in Dublin on 30 June 1940, remarking on Yeats's influence and his "ability, after becoming unquestionably the master, to remain always a contemporary" (6.79). Examining Yeats's "continual development," Eliot revisits the older poet's work from its Pre-Raphaelite beginnings to its innovative late phases. Now in his early fifties, Eliot was in the process of making old age a major theme of *Four Quartets*, a preoccupation that carries over into his extended discussion of Yeats's "poetry of age." In the trajectory of Yeats's career as a verse dramatist, as in that of his poetry, Eliot finds a "gradual purging out of poetical ornament" and a loosening of meter toward an original and flexible rhythm. The debt of future dramatists to the Irish poet is incalculable, he argues, because for models "Yeats had nothing, and we have had Yeats" (6.86). The lecture culminates in an encomium in which Yeats sets the standard for artistic responsibility:

> Born into a world in which the doctrine of "Art for Art's sake" was generally accepted, and living on into one in which art has been asked to be instrumental to social purposes, he held firmly to the right view which is between these, though not in any way a compromise between them, and showed that an artist, by serving his art with entire integrity, is at the same time rendering the greatest service he can to his own nation and to the whole world. (6.87)

When Swinburne died in 1909, Yeats is said to have remarked that he himself was now "king of the cats."[13] Whether or not Eliot saw himself, thirty years later, as the new king of the cats, Yeats's passing marked a similar moment of generational transition, with Eliot's cohort now the elders in a cultural landscape populated increasingly by younger writers. This feeling would be heightened by the loss, only two months apart, of such peers as Woolf and Joyce. With critical assessments of the latter still divergent at the time of his death, Eliot would intensify his longstanding project of promoting Joyce's genius. "Annoyed" (as he described himself to Stephen Spender on 3 February 1941) when the *Times* published an equivocal obituary, he penned an immediate reply, and when the *Times* failed to print this, an exasperated Eliot sent a more strongly worded rebuttal to *Horizon* (6.158). In 1942 he published *Introducing James Joyce: A Selection of Joyce's Prose* (6.329), and in 1943, by arrangement with Talks Producer George Orwell, he broadcast on Joyce over the BBC's Eastern Service (6.427).

Another still recent loss was the *Criterion*, which Eliot shut down in 1939 after almost seventeen years of editorship. The journal now becomes for him another subject of wartime retrospection. He sketches in broad terms the course of the *Criterion*'s history a number of times, always with the suggestion that its decline reflected the recent deterioration of European unity. In spite of "the most diverse political, social and religious views," the journal's contributors – as well as the foreign periodicals with which the *Criterion* communicated – shared, in Eliot's telling, an unconscious "assumption that there existed an international fraternity of men of letters, within Europe: a bond which did not replace, but was perfectly compatible with, national loyalties, religious loyalties, and differences of political philosophy. And that it was our business not so much to make any particular ideas prevail, as to maintain intellectual activity on the highest level" (6.715). He believed that the journal had not succeeded in maintaining this ideal through the 1930s, yet he recognized this failure as a symptom of a larger, more public breakdown. "During the first years after the war," he thought, there had been "an eager curiosity . . . among men of letters in each country about what was going on in others – a curiosity stimulating to every one – such that for a few years there seemed promise that a really European mind might be revived and invigorated." In time, however, "the kind of nationalism which subordinated everything, including culture, to political ideas" reasserted itself, and, as the sense of international fellowship dissolved, "[w]e all became more provincial" (6.423-24). In the founding of energetic new literary periodicals in such places as Lisbon and Rabat, Eliot found renewed hope: "Those of us who were engaged in that attempt during the twenty years between the wars, may have resigned our personal hopes, but have not, I am sure, abandoned our aspirations. We trust that Europe will not follow the same course again; and we look for another literary generation to realise our frustrated ambitions" (6.414).

Eliot's understanding that his generation was entering its twilight gives rise to a new note in his prose. In *The New Criticism* (1941), John Crowe Ransom identified Eliot as "The Historical Critic"; Eliot, at the same moment, was beginning to apply his historicizing tendency to himself and his literary cohort. He strove for a perspective that allowed him to analyze their doctrines and battles – over *vers libre*, classicism, and so forth – as themselves a part of cultural history. In a 1944 Churchill Club lecture on Milton, for example, Eliot would concede that much of his earlier criticism of Milton's influence, from his 1921 claim in "The Metaphysical Poets" that Milton exacerbated the "dissociation of sensibility" (2.380-81) to his 1936 critique in "Milton I" (5.371), was flawed. "My remarks on this point," he now recognized, "belong to the 'politics' of art, like the censure of Pope and Dryden by the Lake Poets" (6.544). He would expand on this idea in "Milton II" (1947), accounting for much of his adversarial stance toward Milton in terms of what he and other "young poets" of the early twentieth century were up against in their fight to establish a new idiom. In another Churchill Club talk, this one a 1945 lecture on Poe, Eliot would again historicize modernist poetry. Rather than speaking as a partisan for the Symbolist tradition with which he associates Poe, and with which he himself was associated, Eliot steps back to show how this aesthetic has come to exhaust itself (6.692).[14] This argument, nascent in the lecture, would ripen before long in "From Poe to Valéry" (1948).

This effort to put modern poetry in historical perspective is a development of Eliot's long-established tenet that literature must be viewed not only as an aesthetic but as a social phenomenon. Eliot stood too close to the world of poetry and was too aware of the diverse practices of his contemporaries to regard modernism as a coherent movement. In his preface to Anne Ridler's *Little Book of Modern Verse*, he asks "what is it that makes modern poetry modern?" but sees no hope of an answer. Having ruled out common influences, conscious aims, and any particular "idiom, vocabulary or metric," he concludes that "an explanation of what makes modern poetry would have to be an explanation of the whole modern world; to understand the poet we should have to understand ourselves" (6.259). From his early critique of the Georgian poets, through "The Metaphysical Poets," to his 1942 rebuttal of anti-modernist diatribes by two antagonists – "If either of them was anything of a sociologist, he might have been interested in not merely denouncing modern art, but in enquiring *why* it is what it is" (6.269) – Eliot suggests that while a poem or a poet can be analyzed by literary criticism, a cultural era requires a sociological explanation; it cannot be explained or evaluated by criticizing individual writers.

Authoritative in assessing the poetry of his own generation, Eliot is notably reticent in pronouncing on the work of the next. In "The Last 25 Years of English Poetry," a lecture he wrote in 1940 for his prospective tour of Italy – the tour that was canceled as the war escalated – he gives most of his attention to the historical background of modern poetry, to Imagism and the poets of World War I, to the development of Yeats and the recovery of Hopkins, and to contemporary prosody in general, commenting only with a palpable reluctance on younger writers. Eliot offers passages from William Empson and W. H. Auden to demonstrate a tendency he perceives toward a recovery of "the music and speech values of three hundred and more years ago," and an excerpt from Stephen Spender to illustrate a "promising" technical development in poetic drama. Though he also mentions Louis MacNeice, George Barker, and Dylan Thomas, he steps gingerly around any critical judgment, pleading that "at this stage it is impossible to be quite sure which young poets have the capacity for indefinite development and maturity, and which will fall by the wayside" (6.42). Eliot hints more than once, however, at what he sees as the appropriate direction for poetry to take in the near-term future. As he puts it in "The Music of Poetry": "It would not be desirable, even if it were possible, to live in a state of perpetual revolution: the craving for continual novelty of diction and metric is as unwholesome as an obstinate adherence to the idiom of our grandfathers. There are times for exploration and times for the development of the territory acquired" (6.319). He thinks of this "development" as a "musical elaboration," a formal sophistication and perhaps refinement that explores the possibilities opened by the contemporary poetic idiom of the modernists (6.321). In a related unpublished lecture titled "Poetry, Speech and Music," Eliot grants that this advice may be only a projection of his own inclinations:

> It may be that the re-adaptation of the poetic idiom to current speech is not yet complete; or it may be that the poetic language has become stabilised for a couple of generations. If I am inclined to the latter guess, that may be only because a middle-aged poet, having done all that he has been capable of in one direction, and casting about for directions in which to explore, becomes more interested in musical analogies and the possibilities of new and more elaborate patterns. (6.282)

On the whole, however, it is the past and not the future of poetry that occupies him at this stage, except in relation to poetic drama. Having published *Little Gidding* in 1942 – the same year as the two lectures just quoted – he would go on in the remaining thirty-three years of his life to focus his creative energies almost exclusively on theatrical verse.

While not one of Eliot's wartime losses in the same sense as Woolf or Joyce, Ezra Pound became, by the end of the war, one of his constant concerns. Nine days after the event, Eliot learned of Pound's arrest by the American forces in Italy on 12 May 1945, and he immediately took the first of many steps to do what he could to help: he telegraphed the poet Archibald MacLeish, who was then working in the US Department of State, "letting him know of my anxiety to do everything possible in Ezra's favour and asking him to advise me."[15] Over the following months Eliot remained in touch with Pound's allies in the United States, such as MacLeish, E. E. Cummings, and the publisher James Laughlin, discussing the legal case against Pound. Only in the fall was he able to reestablish contact with his friend, advising him on 19 October to "do exactly what your lawyer tells you to, and only talk when he wants you to talk." Pound was repatriated to the United States and arraigned for treason the next month – a conviction might have brought a death sentence – but in February 1946 he was declared unfit to stand trial and confined indefinitely at St. Elizabeths Hospital. With the immediate crisis averted, Eliot continued to work on behalf of his old mentor. His efforts included continuing promotion of Pound's literary projects and reputation. Under the Faber imprint, Eliot would soon publish the celebrated *Pisan Cantos*, written while Pound was in detention in Italy; he would also write, for *Poetry* magazine, a substantial article on Pound's work (6.759). This essay recounts in some detail Eliot's first impressions of Pound and the interactions of their early years. Beyond these personal touches, Eliot made a conscious decision to limit his attention "to a statement of [Pound's] contribution to letters," focusing attention on Pound's literary achievements while downplaying his political and economic interests – a strategy he would continue to follow in the coming decade and that would culminate in his 1954 edition of Pound's *Literary Essays*.

Pound was a relative latecomer in the series of causes Eliot took up during the war years; in fact, for a thinker professedly skeptical of causes, Eliot endorsed and in some cases devoted himself to a surprising variety of them. He used the *Christian News-Letter* as a platform from which to condemn the persecution of conscientious objectors and of aliens from the Axis nations, thousands of whom, though themselves refugees from fascism, were now targets of British suspicion, subject to internment and deportation (6.115-17). He opposed the forced imposition of Catholicism on French atheists by the Vichy regime and voiced "the gravest anxiety" over the fate of French Jews, who were being subjected to racist statutes modeled on the laws of Nuremberg (6.180). At the request of the directors of the Polish Research Center, he wrote a preface to a disturbing narrative on an early Nazi atrocity at Auschwitz, committed against Polish prisoners before the facility became a death camp for European Jews.[16] Eliot's preface expresses a deep sympathy for Poland, which, seized at the outset of the war by the Germans from the west and the Soviets from the east, its people abused and tyrannized by both conquerors, had become "the greatest sufferer among the nations" (6.583). After the war he would express a similarly humane concern over reprisals against the Germans (6.694) and the continued incarceration of political prisoners (6.777).

Throughout the period Eliot also joined with various colleagues in publishing letters, mostly in the *Times*, on cultural and political matters

– for example, the plight of the book business (6.798); a subscription to aid the impoverished writer Arthur Machen (6.806); the preservation of bombed-out city churches as war memorials (6.817); the suppression by the British government of an anarchist press (6.820); and the ongoing imprisonment of conscientious objectors in the United States (6.825). Eliot was a signatory to the British Drama League's proposal for state-supported theaters (6.803) and to the foundational declaration of the Joint Standing Committee of Religion and Life and the Sword of the Spirit (6.800), and he collaborated on the early advertisements for the Virgil Society (6.812, 6.814). In his work with Books Across the Sea, he was especially prolific, producing presidential messages, public letters, and radio broadcasts as the occasion demanded. The "cultural understanding" stimulated by such dynamic nongovernmental organizations, he believed, was, "in the long run, more important than politics" to the enrichment of human lives and the maintenance of peace (6.419).

IV

Eliot would not complete his central project in prose, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, during the war years, but he would make extensive progress on it. Its beginnings may be traced to a June 1941 invitation from Maurice Reckitt to contribute an essay on culture to the volume that would ultimately be titled *Prospect for Christendom*. By November of that year, Eliot had organized his thoughts in an outline, and although no one essay would follow this outline closely, all of the many pieces he wrote on culture over the next several years drew from the reservoir of phrases and ideas amassed there. It is in the outline, published for the first time in this volume, that Eliot begins to concern himself explicitly with the definition of culture. In that context he distinguishes the common Arnoldian sense of "culture" as the fine arts from a broader sense of "culture" as the totality of the social forms and practices of a people. Since there is "No 'culture' without *a* culture," as he puts it in the outline, the arts are "therefore involved with the whole business of living, with manners and customs, and ultimately with religion" (6.197).[17] Eliot would exploit his knowledge of anthropology to sketch the development of such "specialized" cultural forms as the arts from more holistic primitive antecedents. His exploration of the multiple meanings of "culture," first worked up from the outline in an essay titled "Notes towards a [*sic*] Definition of Culture" (6.343), would be refined in "Cultural Forces in the Human Order" (6.605), and the latter would in turn be further revised as the first chapter of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. Like the book, both of these wartime essays analyze the intimate relation between culture and religion. Eliot rejects the notion that a religion is merely a component of a culture on the grounds that "the religion is the body of beliefs which gives that culture significance, and has also a profound effect upon the form which the culture takes" (6.351). He advocates, instead, a "conception of culture and religion as being, when each term is taken in the right context, different aspects of the same thing" (6.613) – an idea, he admits, "so difficult that I am not sure that I grasp it myself except in flashes, or that I understand all its implications" (6.613). Seen in retrospect, this intuition about the deep connection between culture and religion had been crucial to Eliot's thought for many years even while yet unformulated.

Another of Eliot's primary interests in his essays on culture is the idea of a balanced circulation of culture among various constituent elements. He argues repeatedly, as we have seen, that a healthy exchange among nations is vital to the restoration and maintenance of European culture.[18] Cultural nationalism and internationalism are equally hazardous if taken too far: nationalism leads to isolation, which engenders atrophy, while the "universal identical culture" that follows from a thoroughgoing internationalism "is no culture" (6.423). Both unity and diversity are required (6.521). Eliot makes a parallel argument with respect to national versus local cultures within a given country: English, Welsh, and Scottish culture can thrive, for example, only if all three continue to exist, and if British culture, comprising their common core, also continues to exist (6.630-31). The pressures of modernity, however, are all in the direction of centralization: "The effects of an industrial civilisation have combined to deprive the mass of humanity of its native culture. . . . The assemblage of masses of men in large centres for mechanical occupations, the mobility of labour (a mobility which labour instinctively resists), the separation of work and play, tend to destroy culture at the root" (6.346). These effects represent a serious threat, for "[a] country with no local variations of culture will not just have a uniform culture: its culture, *because* it is uniform, will be a mediocre one" (6.630). These arguments, developed across a series of papers between 1943 and 1945, will later crystallize in the third chapter of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, titled "Unity and Diversity: The Region."[19]

Eliot argues analogously that within any society, various aspects of the culture are maintained by the different social classes, to the benefit of all.

The "conscious" culture associated with the upper classes – that is, the fine arts – both emerges from, and, in turn, influences the popular culture. Eliot describes this circulation of culture metaphorically, with "the roots imbibing nourishment from the soil, the sap rising through the stem, and the dead leaves falling to earth to feed the soil that feeds the roots" (6.657), and he is certain that no culture can flourish outside this organic system. It is probably the central and ineradicable role that Eliot assigns to inherited social class, more than anything else, that has tended to marginalize his writings in later cultural criticism.

Although by the 1940s the desirability of a classless society is already taken for granted by most social thinkers, the necessity of groups of individuals particularly well equipped for certain social functions remains accepted – thus the expectation that elites in time will replace classes, and that leadership will fall to the meritorious rather than to those born to privilege. Eliot's doubts about the viability of this social goal, or at any rate about its cultural consequences, bring him into debate with Karl Mannheim, the influential sociologist, with whom Eliot had developed a warm friendship through their participation in the Moot. Eliot has serious misgivings about how future elites drawn from all segments of society are to be selected, educated, and made to coalesce; he believes, in effect, that Mannheim does not give this issue enough attention, and that the schemes proposed by others – such as K. G. Collier, who envisions talented children being taken from their families to be educated into their callings – are unworkable (6.363). His main concern, however, is with the "transmission of culture," and it is here that he believes the class system plays a vital role. Since culture, by Eliot's definition, "is not merely the sum of several activities, but a *way of life*," it is largely "inherited," primarily through the family (6.660-61). In the existing social structure, he points out, various subcultures are practiced and transmitted through families belonging, more or less permanently, to different social classes. The replacement of such a system by one in which stable classes are abolished in favor of fluid, merit-based elites will have unpredictable and, Eliot suspects, disastrous effects on the continuity of culture. He begins to develop these arguments in "The Place and Function of the Clerisy," a 1944 paper written for the Moot, and takes them further the next year in "The Class and the Élite," which will become the second chapter of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*.[20] With this essay, published in the *New English Weekly*, Eliot includes a note indicating that he is now planning a longer oeuvre on the "Definition of Culture"

(6.666, n. 1). He reports to Allen Tate on 13 March 1945 that he is "at present working (except when interrupted, which is pretty often) on a small book which I can only describe as a more up-to-date affair than *Culture and Anarchy*. It sprouts out of an article of mine ['Notes towards a Definition of Culture'], which you may have seen in *The Partisan Review*." To this he adds ruefully, "I don't think it will increase my popularity."

His concern with the transmission of culture leads Eliot to write a number of times on the topic of modern education, and although in his letter to Tate he dismisses his writings on this subject as "vapourings," they are consistent with his argument on culture and class. Eliot treats skeptically the contemporary ideal of "equality of opportunity" and the notion "that the chief problem" of modern education "is to provide more of it for more people" (6.289). If, as he argues, each social class generates, contributes, and preserves its own valuable subculture, a system whose goal is to initiate all students into the high culture of the upper-class minority is wrongheaded and potentially damaging. This idea will be developed furthest in the final chapter of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. But solicitude for his "popularity" does not restrain Eliot from saying, for example, "I hope that we shall not consciously or unconsciously drift towards the view that it is better for everybody to have a second-rate education, than for only a small minority to have the best" (6.290).

Aside from the deleterious effects on British culture that he anticipates, Eliot's other major misgiving about education reform involves its effect on religious instruction. He seldom writes of religious pedagogy per se; his interest, rather, is that all education be conducive to a Christian society – a problem he takes up in such essays as "The Christian Conception of Education" (6.246) and "Education in a Christian Society" (6.19). "What we have to guard against," he writes in the *Christian News-Letter*, is that the "new syllabus of 'religious knowledge'" instituted by a reformed education system "should result in a kind of National Christianity, the vagaries of which would be free from the control of any theological authority" (6.182). The immediate threat is not secular education; rather, it is that an education oriented around a Christianity acceptable to all will be so dilute as to be effectively secular. Eliot's apprehensions found a focus in the 1944 Education Act, or Butler Act, which effectuated universal, free secondary education within a modernized system. As the bill moved toward passage, Eliot warned, "No one so far, appears to have devoted any attention to the probable effects of such a measure upon English culture: even the ecclesiastics have not arrived at any definite view of the probable effects upon English religion" (6.526, n. 6).

The secularization of Europe, and of Britain in particular, was an ongoing source of distress for Eliot and for several of the organizations with which he associated himself. The Joint Standing Committee of Religion and Life and the Sword of the Spirit, for example, declared in its foundational statement that since Christianity was "the preserver of human society from excesses and errors, we feel that all Christians are bound in duty and charity alike towards their fellow-countrymen to oppose the present tendencies to set Christianity aside and to treat it as a matter of private concern without relevance to the principles which should guide society" (6.800). This sense of public responsibility motivated not only the Joint Committee but groups like the Moot, the Chandos group, and Oldham's *Christian News-Letter*. The social order Eliot had imagined in *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) seemed a very long way off. He addressed the situation realistically in "Towards a Christian Britain," a 1941 radio broadcast, not hesitating to remind his audience how difficult the end would be to attain, yet urging continued striving: "Our ambition to create a Christian Britain is the greatest we can take to ourselves. Because of its greatness, we know that it is beyond our power as human beings, and this knowledge should bring not discouragement but a greater hope. A Christian Britain implies not merely converts, but the conversion of social consciousness" (6.166). Perceiving the contemporary situation in terms of historical trends, Eliot saw the plight of religion as intimately connected with developments in culture:

> The ignoring of the integral religious-social problem, by defenders of Christian faith, has led, I think, in the past generation to our stressing the conscious element in the lapse away from Christianity, to the neglect of what I believe to have been a more powerful cause, the social changes, the mobility, the insecurity, the mechanization of minds and the atomization of individuals in an industrial age, which have operated unconsciously upon the mass of human beings. (6.139)

Eliot did not believe that secularization could be addressed without simultaneous attention to cultural change and a concern with social justice. He was equally apt to argue that social issues could not be tackled effectively without a simultaneous attention to theology, for "we shall never realise our Christian social aims if we cultivate them in forgetfulness of our duty towards God and our duty towards ourselves" (6.163).

Eliot's religious commitment was not merely, of course, generically Christian or even generically Anglican: he was a faithful Anglo-Catholic and believed ardently in the doctrines of that high-church tradition within the Church of England. He believed, too, in the *value* of doctrine, advising his compatriots:

> We need to know what it is that we profess to believe, and without believing which we are not Christian. We must know the dogmas of our faith – and if you do not know what a dogma is, or why it is vitally important, then the first thing that you can do to help towards a Christian Britain is to find out. (6.164)

Reacting, perhaps, against the Unitarianism in which he had been raised, Eliot derogated nondogmatic religion and preferred even sectarian divergence to a universally agreeable creed without content.[21] In the latter he saw the eventual dissolution of faith: "The beginning of overt secularization lies in non-sectarianism" (6.248).

This background helps to explain why in 1943 Eliot threw himself with such vigor into what now seems an obscure controversy over an ecclesiastical matter: an interdenominational proposal to create a united Church of South India. This scheme was intended to address difficulties arising in the missionary field, where various Christian denominations had been competing with one another in a vast subcontinent for decades, each with its own scarce resources – a difficulty that led to more than twenty years of dialogue with the goal of forming a single unified Christian Church. The results of this planning, published in 1942, had to accommodate both Protestant and Catholic visions of the nature of the Church and its role in spiritual life. For example, since the clergy of the new Church of South India was to include both evangelical Protestant ministers and Anglican priests and bishops, the proposal gingerly stepped around the matter of Apostolic Succession. It acknowledged that some Christians believed that bishops, as the anointed successors of the Apostles from generation to generation, inherited the spiritual authority vested in the Apostles by Jesus himself. But the proposal did not state that this doctrine was the *truth*; it merely described it as one Christian perspective. Similarly equivocal language was employed to avoid a clash over the Eucharist. What seemed practical compromises to the proponents of the new Church were, to opponents like Eliot, a betrayal of principles. In a 1943 pamphlet titled *Reunion by Destruction: Reflections on a Scheme for Church Union in South India*, Eliot argued that if the Church of England professed to teach essential truths about God and the world, its endorsement of a new Church that did not profess those teachings would fatally undermine its own integrity (6.447). He would debate the matter twice in letters to the *Times* in 1943 and rebut an attack on his pamphlet in the *Church of England Newspaper* in early 1944. Eliot was not antagonistic in theory to a reunification of the fractured Christian Church; he believed, however, that the condition of the Church reflected the disintegrated condition of modern culture, and that "any re-union is flimsy which is not also a re-union of cultures" (6.738). He feared, moreover, that the prying apart of religion from culture by secularism disposed his contemporaries toward a premature reintegration that treated "genuine theological differences" as negligible (6.740). In this "unification by minimal belief," he foresaw the danger of a dissolution of the spiritual into the secular (6.340). In spite of his participation in interdenominational projects such as the Joint Committee, he would be no friend to the burgeoning ecumenical movement of the post-World War II era. The Church of South India was established in 1947 over the vigorous objections of Anglo-Catholics; a year later, the World Council of Churches was founded, confirming this ecumenical tendency in the broader world and further sidelining Eliot's religious position.

V

Other important changes in Eliot's world were imminent. This volume extends beyond the end of World War II by a year and thus takes Eliot to the brink of another global conflict: the Cold War. Signs of its incipience are visible in his writings. In late 1945 Eliot publicly supported Bertrand Russell's principled attack on the ethnic cleansing being carried out in Eastern Europe, a process in which the Soviets and others, returning wrong for wrong, caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans (6.694). The next year, Faber & Faber would publish *The Dark Side of the Moon*, a harrowing depiction of the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland that followed the 1939 nonaggression pact between Stalin and Hitler. Eliot's preface begins with the recognition that the book is not only about Poland: it is also "incidentally a book about Europe – not the Europe with which we were familiar in the past, but the Europe in which we now have to live" (6.742). The correctness of this intuition would very soon be evident.

At home, Eliot faced the inception of the welfare state. The 1945 general election brought in a Labour government determined to implement major social welfare programs and a planned economy. This was indeed the age of social planning, a practice much discussed in the 1940s as the way of the future, and Karl Mannheim, who made "planning for freedom" a central organizing concept at Moot meetings, was an important theorist. By 1944 Eliot could profess himself tired of the word "planning" (6.531). His strongest objection, however, was to the notion that the growth of *culture* could be engineered by civil servants: "So the chief concern of governments, as of gardeners, is to dispose of impediments to natural growth. . . . I have no experience of such matters; but agriculture seems to me to provide an interesting analogy to *culture*. In this matter, government can only assist nature" (6.636). His skepticism came through clearly in his reaction to the founding, in late 1945, of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "The first task of a cultural organization should be to consider how far 'culture' is susceptible of 'organization,'" Eliot wrote in a letter to the *Times Educational Supplement*, "and this question is peculiarly urgent at a time when the cultural organisms of Europe are either destroyed or in process of destruction. The opportunities for getting lost in a verbal labyrinth without issue, when the representatives of 37 nations have assembled to draw conclusions from unexamined premises, are unlimited" (6.696).

Eliot's wartime experience is bookended by two relocations: the first, amid the Blitz, from London to Mrs. Mirrlees's home in Surrey; the second, with the war over, back to London. In late November 1945 he signed the lease for 19 Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where he now shared a flat with his friend John Hayward. This move initiated what would turn out to be the second-to-last phase of his life, in which his social life centered on his relationships with Hayward and Mary Trevelyan. We leave him thus near the outset of an eleven-year period that will end only in January 1957, when he marries Valerie Fletcher.

By 1946 Eliot had practically finished his work as a "pure" poet, but the theatrical success he craved lay just ahead in the form of *The Cocktail Party* (1950), which would run for over 400 performances on Broadway and over 300 in the West End. And he still had important work to do in prose criticism, with projects begun during the war years – especially *Notes towards* *the Definition of Culture* – still taking shape, and his late major essays and much else as yet unbegun. His fame and influence, which he would retain for the rest of his life, were only just reaching their peak. When Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, the presentation speech by Anders Österling ended, appropriately, by noting that Eliot now stood, literally, where Yeats had been standing twenty-five years before.[22] Eliot was now indeed, by acclamation, the king of the cats.

NOTES

1. "On the Place and Function of the Clerisy" was first published posthumously in Roger Kojecky's *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

2. Home Office, *The Duties of Air Raid Wardens*, Air Raid Precautions Handbook No. 8, 2nd edn. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1938).

3. Eliot would depict the London of this period memorably in several passages of *Little Gidding*, describing the "incandescent terror" of enemy warplanes, the dust of destruction "in the air suspended" after a nocturnal raid, and the general sense of unreality as the familiar town became a nightly purgatory (*CPP* 196, 192-93; *Poems1* 207, 202-03).

4. To I. A. Richards, 20 Feb 1944.

5. 19 Sept 1942.

6. 1 Jan 1943.

7. "Johnson as Critic and Poet" was delivered as a 1944 lecture at University College, Bangor, Wales; however, since it first appeared in print in 1957, when Eliot collected it in *OPP*, it is not included in the present volume. The lecture Eliot originally hoped to develop for his appearance in Bangor, "Poetical and Prosaic Use of Words," appears here as a previously unpublished item (6.365).

8. Eliot actually offered two lectures under this same title. He identifies the version published in *OPP* as "An address delivered at the British-Norwegian Institute in 1943 and subsequently developed for delivery to an audience in Paris in 1945" (15), and the table of contents there gives 1945 as the date of the essay. In fact, however, the piece reprinted in *OPP* is substantially identical to the 1943 version, while the lecture given later in Paris overlaps only occasionally with its predecessor, though the two lectures do reach comparable conclusions.

9. The words of the ghost in *Little Gidding* resonate with this idea: "our concern was speech, and speech impelled us / To purify the dialect of the tribe" (*CPP* 194; *Poems1* 205).

10. To Sir Humphrey Milfred, 16 May 1945.

11. To Enid Faber, 27 Apr 1941.

12. "T. S. E. – A Memoir," *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, ed. Allen Tate (New York: Dell, 1966), 17. On 10 May 1941, with *Horizon* in press, Eliot wrote to Leonard Woolf with apologies for the tone of his note. Through an editorial error, he explained, a number of changes he had requested in the text – alterations that, he thought, would have ameliorated its "pomposity" – had not been made. With this letter he enclosed the page proofs, telling Woolf, "I should like you to see what I actually intended to appear."

13. Joseph Hone, *W. B. Yeats: 1865-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 230.

14. The Churchill Club talks on Milton and Poe survive only in the form of the lecture notes included in the present volume; however, the relation of these notes to the finished lectures Eliot would deliver and publish later in the 1940s is clear in both cases.

15. To Adrian Stokes, 17 May 1945.

16. Eliot does not comment, here or elsewhere, on the Nazi "Final Solution"; neither his wartime prose works nor his letters reveal an awareness of the death camps. The aforementioned expression of concern about the French Jews, dating from Sept 1941, suggests that he was not indifferent to the plight of European Jewry; however, he generated no sustained discourse on the subject.

17. To be sure, the place of the arts within such a cultural totality had concerned Eliot in earlier works, such as *ASG*; what is new in his work of the 1940s is their conscious attention to the multiple meanings of the term "culture" and the consequences of distinguishing – or failing to distinguish – between them.

18. Given the wartime circumstances and his Christian commitments, Eliot emphasizes European culture, but he does not regard other world cultures as irrelevant – a point he emphasizes in his 1946 broadcast to Germany: "For when I speak of the unity of European culture, I do not want to give the impression that I regard European culture as something cut off from every other. The frontiers of culture are not, and should not be, closed. But history makes a difference. Those countries which share the most history, are the most important to each other, with respect to their future literature" (6.712).

19. See "Civilisation: The Nature of Cultural Relations" (6.420), "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe" (6.520-24), and, especially, "Cultural Diversity and European Unity" (6.625).

20. He would also take up and defend the concept of aristocracy, in particular, in "Responsibility and Power" (6.487-88) and in letters to the *Times* (6.499) and *Christendom* (6.531).

21. Thus his objection to the "national Christianity" proffered by the Butler Education Act. "[W]e might consider," he wrote, "how this teaching is to be completed by the specific instruction which will make the child not merely a 'Christian' in the abstract, but a member of the Church of Rome, the Church of England or that of Scotland, a Methodist, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, or a member of some other communion. . . . For we owe an obligation, each of us to our particular church, to preserve its doctrine entire and undefiled" (6.182).

22. Horst Frenz, ed., *Nobel Lectures: Literature, 1901-1967* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1969), 434.

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EDITORIAL PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES

I. PUBLISHED PROSE

Criteria for Inclusion

Eliot's uncollected prose makes up the vast majority of the writings published in his lifetime and spans the period from his stories in the *Smith Academy Record* in 1905 to his final autobiographical note for the *Harvard College Class of 1910: Fifty-fifth Anniversary Report*, contributed in late December 1964, shortly before his death on 4 January 1965. These writings include hundreds of reviews and essays contributed to periodicals; commentaries in the *Criterion*; letters to the press (printed here and in the *Letters*; in each place they appear in different contexts of personal letters and public prose, thereby inviting separate readings and annotation); lectures and addresses published separately in wrappers or in boards; introductions, prefaces, and forewords to books and to translations of his works in foreign languages; testimonials and other contributions to domestic and foreign newspapers; and public broadcasts published or excerpted in the *Listener*. Beginning with volume 5, the increasing numbers of published items unrecorded in the Gallup bibliography are identified in the Contents with a diamond (♦).

By the mid-1930s, Eliot began to receive numerous invitations to give Prize Day speeches to secondary schools and addresses to and in support of various societies, charities, and churches. He often gave the only copy of his typescript to his hosts, who published or summarized the texts in their school magazines, newsletters, or local newspapers, most of which remained bibliographically unrecorded. Some of these typescripts and printed texts have been recovered; other typescripts have been lost, or the addresses were made from notes and outlines afterward discarded. But, in many instances, a staff member, or a reporter from a local paper, was present to write a report, often with substantial quotations, at times seemingly with Eliot's text in hand. These firsthand reports of addresses and lectures have been included in Part II, "Transcripts and Summary Reports of Lectures," as valuable records of Eliot's little-known secondary intellectual life in his cultural domain.

Among his own letters to the press are those of which he was a signatory with one or more others. His role in the authorship is often uncertain, but his growing support of public appeals, causes, and concerns is of permanent interest. Such signed letters, which appear in significant numbers in volume 6, are collected and chronologically included in Part III, "Signed Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship."

Chronology

With a few exceptions, the editors have arranged the majority of Eliot's unpublished and published prose writings in the original order of composition or publication to allow the reader to follow closely his developing patterns of thought as he immersed himself in intellectual journalism and literary criticism from year to year, decade to decade. The primary volumes of collected essays, together with their prefaces and introductions, have been disassembled and their contents returned to chronological order alongside the uncollected and unpublished prose.

Less than 10 percent of Eliot's prose writings underwent textual changes when they were reprinted or collected; most pieces were never revisited after their first publication in periodical and other forms. Some reviews and essays, however, particularly those included in *The Sacred Wood*, were combined and revised by Eliot as new essays: successively published reviews of books on Ben Jonson in November 1919, on Philip Massinger in May-June 1920, and on Swinburne and others in the two-part "The Perfect Critic" in July 1920. The original reviews were redacted as such and included in the volume under the first title of each pair. He collapsed three other reviews published between September and December 1919 under the title "Imperfect Critics" for the volume. Moreover, "Eeldrop and Appleplex" and "Tradition and the Individual Talent," both originally published in two separate parts months apart, have been combined into single pieces. In such uncharacteristic cases, we have sacrificed adherence to chronology in order to present the complete texts, but not without indicating the separate chronological positions and titles and recording significant textual changes.

A few other considerations have led us to relax the chronological order of publication in specific instances, including Eliot's doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley, a draft of which was completed and approved in 1916 but not edited and published until 1964. The editors have placed this lengthy work neither intrusively into the published reviews of 1916, nor awkwardly out of context in 1964, but logically at the end of the graduate essays of 1913-15, essays that led to and were organically drawn upon for the dissertation. In presenting a corrected, re-edited, and more readable critical text in that position, the editors have drawn upon the original dissertation typescript, the proofs and correspondence of the suppressed first printing (1963), and the proofs and text of the 1964 edition.

The three volumes of university lectures – *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, *After Strange Gods, The Idea of a Christian Society* – as well as *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, have been kept intact and edited as the coherent, self-contained works that they were intended to be; however, when individual lectures were published separately, the publication data and any alterations are recorded in the textual notes. The Clark Lectures (1926) and Turnbull Lectures (1933), edited and published together posthumously as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (1993), have also been kept intact, each re-edited and included separately and chronologically in respective volumes. The dates of composition of individual reviews, essays, and lectures are given when they are known.

In volume 4 (1930-1933), the chronology has been altered to present together the majority of Eliot's lectures in America as the Charles Eliot Norton professor at Harvard during the 1932-33 academic year. These include his Norton and Turnbull lectures and individual lectures written for delivery at numerous American institutions, together with the editorial reconstruction of five lectures destroyed before his return to England in June 1933. The unit is preceded by a separate "Chronology of Lectures and Readings." Those lectures that were not published until later in 1933 have been arranged by date of delivery, with subsequent publication information given in the notes. Eliot's Page-Barbour lectures, however, delivered at the University of Virginia in May 1933 but substantially revised before publication as *After Strange Gods* in 1934, appear in accordance with their publication date in volume 5 (1934-1939).

Standardization of Formats

Eliot's prose in little magazines and periodicals appears under a variety of house styles: the divergent formats, typography, spacing, and indents for paragraphs and set-off quotations have all been standardized. As the bibliographical descriptions and kinds of information provided for books under review also varied considerably from periodical to periodical, these descriptions have been standardized in the heading, as have the descriptions and dates of the periodicals in which the reviews first appeared. Unsigned reviews and essays are indicated as such in the heading or in an initial note;

all opening and closing signatures – signed or initialed – and pseudonyms are placed at the right margin at the end of the text.

Titles

Before 1919, many of Eliot's reviews were untitled; thereafter, most were titled unless they appeared as part of a "Commentary" in the *Criterion*. Since many reviews were given their titles by the editors of the periodicals in which they appeared, and since Eliot and his editors occasionally changed the titles of those essays that he chose to collect in book form, the editors have provided Eliot's final title ("Hamlet"), with the first and American titles ("Hamlet and his Problems") given in the notes. Titles of reviews, and titles under which Eliot's letters to editors of periodicals and newspapers appeared, were presumably supplied by his editors but are retained for ease of recognition.

Prose Transcription Errors

Under pressure to meet deadlines, Eliot frequently made transcription errors when quoting passages of prose from other authors. His editors were often inattentive to these matters, and frequently did not arrange for him to read proof. Thus, the editors of the present edition have silently restored dropped words, supplied missing ellipses, added overlooked italics and quotation marks, and placed capitals made from lowercase letters in brackets. More substantial alterations are indicated in the textual notes. Eliot often provided selected page numbers for prose quotations in parentheses in the texts; when he did not do so, the editors have supplied missing numbers in brackets in the texts and in parentheses in the notes.

Misquotations of Poetry

When minor transcription errors occur in lines or passages of poetry quoted directly from a volume under review, they are silently corrected. However, some of Eliot's misquotations are more slips of memory than mistranscriptions. Such misquotations are preserved in the text and corrected in the notes. In some instances, the misquotations affect the commentary, and in every instance, it is of interest to observe how Eliot held certain passages of poetry, especially from Dante and Shakespeare, in memory and summoned them spontaneously for unchecked use. Frank Kermode, editor of Eliot's *Selected Prose* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), took pains to point out such misquotations in Eliot's essays, "not from pedantry, but from a conviction that in the poet Eliot misquotation is sometimes creative" (307).

American / English Punctuation Practice

From 1909 through the preface to the second edition (1928) of *The Sacred Wood*, all of Eliot's prose was printed in what is now called American punctuation style, with double inverted commas for quotations, punctuation inside quotation marks. English periodicals such as the *Egoist*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Nation*, the *New Statesmen*, the *Bookman*, the *Spectator*, the *TLS*, and others that printed Eliot's work used this common style. From the publication of *For Lancelot Andrewes* in 1928, however, all of the Faber editions of his collected essays were printed in English punctuation style, with single inverted commas, punctuation outside (inconsistently so). In editing the *Criterion*, Eliot followed the American style from 1922 to 1926, when it shifted to English style, with punctuation inconsistently inside and outside quotations. Many English periodicals, particularly those published jointly in America, continued to use the American style, and Eliot continued to publish unreprinted essays in American periodicals. Moreover, the American editions of his work systematically converted the Faber editions to American style. In an attempt to achieve uniformity and minimize error, the editors of this edition, in consultation with the publishers and the Eliot Estate, follow the American style throughout. The earlier Faber policy of italicizing all set-off quotations in Eliot's texts has not been followed.

Translations

A number of Eliot's essays and prefaces were commissioned by a foreign audience, translated, and published only in foreign translation. The translation and the English original are both included when possible. If the original English text has not been recovered, an English translation is provided. When an English text first published in translation was revised before publication in English, the substantive alterations are noted.

Annotations

Eliot's works were translated into thirty-eight languages in his lifetime, and his writings continue to attract a worldwide readership. In annotating this edition, the editors aim to serve scholars, students, and modern readers who come to Eliot's prose from numerous languages, backgrounds, and fields of interest – not only in literary criticism but in economics, education, philosophy, politics, theology, cultural theory, popular culture, and other disciplines. Eliot was reluctant to collect much of his prose because he felt that many of his remarks, originally composed under the pressure of deadlines, would need qualification, clarification, and correction. We have attempted to create notes that will enhance and clarify his highly referential prose, and have been mindful of both the immediate and the larger intellectual context of his writings: we draw upon his correspondence and manuscripts; where no source is given, it may be assumed that the original letter, manuscript, or carbon copy is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or at the Faber and Faber archive. When it is helpful, we make cross-references to earlier and later comments. We have attempted to identify every specific literary and nonliterary allusion; to trace all references to newspapers, periodicals, and other documents; and to identify the books and editions that he employed. As part of our larger aim to illuminate the breadth of Eliot's learning and the depths of recall that inform and enrich the texture of his critical prose, we have noted relevant inscriptions and markings in his personal copies. Eliot's own notes are indicated with an asterisk (*) after the superscript number; notes that include textual variants are indicated with a dagger (†) after the superscript.

II. UNPUBLISHED PROSE

Much of Eliot's prose was written not for publication but for reading or broadcasting to specific audiences on particular occasions: philosophical essays for postgraduate seminars, tutorials, and philosophical societies at Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge; addresses as president of the Alliance française, London Library, Virgil Society, Books Across the Sea, Académie septentrionale, and other organizations; responses as recipient of honorary degrees, medals, and other honors; remarks at the opening of exhibitions and conferences; and appeals in aid of civic and charitable causes. Eliot chose to put these items aside as ephemeral materials in the life of a man of letters. Because of the scholarly interest and biographical richness that they contain, they are included, with thanks to Mrs. Eliot, in this edition. More than one hundred unpublished items, all of which are identified as such, are incorporated chronologically into the individual volumes of *The Complete Prose*. The first is an undergraduate essay, "The Defects of Kipling," written at Harvard in March 1909, and the last a telegram, "Tribute to John F. Kennedy," read by Jacqueline Kennedy at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., on 25 November 1964.

The early philosophical essays exist in pencil or ink manuscripts and in typescripts with holograph emendations. After Eliot left graduate school, he composed nearly all of his work on a typewriter, with frequent typeovers (xxxxx) and holograph corrections and insertions. On some occasions, his first wife, Vivien, or a secretary, typed his drafts. The BBC usually retyped his broadcast scripts, which often contain last-minute emendations. In editing the large variety of Eliot's unpublished writings, we attempt to present texts that are as accurate, clear, and readable as possible, with a minimum of emendation. To distinguish them from published writings, the editors have preserved some of the physical characteristics of the manuscripts (such as underlinings), choosing not to regularize them as published items lest they lose all the visual character of their composition. Previously unpublished texts are identified in the Contents with a star (*) and are introduced in the volume by headnotes that provide the occasion, date, place, and context of their preparation and presentation. The location and physical description of the manuscripts are given in the textual notes, together with editorial notation of substantial alterations and deletions made by Eliot himself. When no source is given, it may be assumed that the original or carbon is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or in the Faber and Faber archive.

Eliot's unpublished texts are edited according to the following additional principles:

False starts and insignificant deletions are excised, but ~~strikeouts~~, when illuminating or clarifying, are retained or given in notes.

Typed or holograph underlinings for emphasis have been retained; occasional red ribbon color changes, an alternate method of emphasizing words and phrases, are represented in bold; underlined titles and foreign words are italicized; unpunctuated or mispunctuated titles of books, plays, and poems are corrected and standardized.

Abbreviated titles, names, and places are expanded, as are ampersands, but his occasional uses of cf., i.e., e.g., sc., passim, etc., have been retained, unitalicized.

Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected; readings of illegible words are followed by a bracketed question mark [?]; most compound adjectives (seventeenth-century poetry) are hyphenated, consistent with his ordinary practice.

Eliot's variant spellings – British, American, period (to-day), alternate (behoves) – are retained; opening and/or closing inverted commas (quotation marks) have been supplied where Eliot has overlooked them; inconsistent placement of punctuation inside and outside inverted commas is standardized; missing accents and diacriticals are supplied.

When the volume and/or page numbers for a quotation are given by Eliot in the margin or in the text, the numbers are placed in parentheses at the end of the quotation or in the notes; when editorially supplied, they are placed in brackets.

Clearly superfluous or unintended punctuation (commas before parentheses), and some unintended double punctuation (;–) have been deleted or corrected. Where the omission of punctuation causes confusion, it has been supplied; when, in Eliot's hand, the use of a semicolon or colon is unclear, the editors have interpreted the punctuation in terms of clarity and grammatical structure.

Eliot's substantive marginal comments related to the text but not part of the body of the text are quoted and noted where they occur. When Eliot makes marginal statements with lines drawn for insertion in the text during the process of composition, they are identified in the notes. When it is clear that Eliot has made insertions from the margin or an appended page *after* the body of the text was drafted or completed, as in his essay on "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" in volume 2, they are introduced into the text with a bracketed and italicized phrase, [*insertion*:] or [*appended insertion*:], with the end of the insertion similarly indicated [*end insertion*]. His occasional notes and outlines on the verso of a page are recorded in the textual notes.

III. FUTURE EDITIONS

The contents of this edition, which are presented in eight separate volumes, are enhanced by the inclusion of more than two hundred published items that are not recorded in the Gallup bibliography. As extensive as our collection efforts have been, we are confident that fugitive items will be found, and we encourage readers to submit them for inclusion in the edition, which is managed and maintained by Johns Hopkins University Press. A future digital platform will ensure that *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* is a living edition, with the capacity to include newly discovered prose items, to correct errors, and to provide more illustrations and digital innovations for readers than would be possible in a print edition. To place Eliot's primary prose before scholars and readers expeditiously, the editors include only those writings in this first edition. Eventually, however, a wide range of secondary prose materials will be available, including (1) additional juvenilia; (2) "Foreign Exchanges," Eliot's monthly articles for *Lloyds Bank Monthly*, 1923-25; (3) unpublished personal notes and notes from student classes; (4) interviews; (5) unpublished book reports for Faber and Faber; (6) blurbs and endorsements; (7) outlines of informal talks; and (8) Eliot's translations of works by other authors, primarily for publication in the *Criterion.* As additional resources become accessible, we envision a website that contains both an increasingly comprehensive and accurate critical edition and an invaluable repository of prose materials for researchers and readers in a new digital age of Eliot studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PUBLISHED WORKS BY T. S. ELIOT

ASG	*After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
CPP	*The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).
EAM	*Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936).
EE	*Elizabethan Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
FLA	*For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928).
HJD	*Homage to John Dryden: Three Essays on Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1924).
ICS	*The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939).
IMH	*Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Faber & Faber, 1996).
KE	*Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
L1	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1: 1898-1922, revised edn., ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L2	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2: 1923-1925, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L3	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 3: 1926-1927, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2012).
L4	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 4: 1928-1929, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2013).
L5	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 5: 1930-1931, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2014).

L6	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 6: 1932-1933, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2016).
L7	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 7: 1934-1935, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2017).
NTDC	*Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948).
OPP	*On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957).
Poems1	*The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1, ed. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; London: Faber & Faber, 2015).
Poems2	*The Poems of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2, ed. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; London: Faber & Faber, 2015).
SE	*Selected Essays*, 3rd edn. (London: Faber & Faber, 1951).
SW	*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920).
TCC	*To Criticize the Critic* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965).
UPUC	*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 2nd edn. (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
VMP	*The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (London: Faber & Faber, 1993; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1994).
WLF	*The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1971; New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971).

PERIODICALS

CN-L	*The Christian News-Letter*
NEW	*The New English Weekly*
NRF	*La Nouvelle Revue française*
TES	*The Times Educational Supplement*
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement*

OTHER WORKS

DC2	*The Purgatorio of Dante*, Temple Classics edn., trans. Thomas Okey (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).

Gallup	Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, revised & extended edn. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969).
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
Lives	Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, Chandos Classics, new edn. (London: Frederick Warne, 1872).
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner. 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
Scheme	*Proposed Scheme of Union, Including Draft Basis of Union for Adoption by the Uniting Churches, Draft Constitution of the United Church, and Other Documents*, 7th revised edn. (Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1943).

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Houghton	The Houghton Library, Harvard University
King's	Modern Archive Center, King's College, Cambridge
Ransom	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

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PART I

Essays, Reviews, Addresses, and Public Letters

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Hole and Corner Buffery

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

In his column "From a Journalist's Note-Book," the pseudonymous contributor Laicus Ignotus ("Unknown Layman") attacked TSE's friend Canon Bernard Iddings Bell in the *Church Times* for his arguments against U.S. intervention in the war.[1] "Dr. Bell," wrote Laicus Ignotus on 1 Dec 1939, "ridicules the claim that Great Britain is fighting for liberty, democracy and justice, and he has the effrontery to declare she is really fighting to save herself from becoming a secondary world power. . . . Dr. Goebbels should be grateful to him, and doubtless is" (472).

In a reply printed in the *Church Times* on 12 Jan 1940, Bell disputed this "grotesque misrepresentation" of his views (22). To Bell's protest, Sidney Dark (1874-1947), the editor of the *Church Times*, appended a brief comment: "It has been an unpleasant duty to quote from Dr. Bell's writings on the war and on Britain's aims. These quotations have, we should suppose, alienated for ever all his British admirers." It was this note that provoked TSE's response, which he dated 14 Jan 1940. His letter was not published.

The idiomatic phrase "hole-and-corner" in TSE's title means "surreptitious"; "Buffery" indicates adherence to the Buffs, in preference to the Blues – the indistinguishable but fiercely opposed political parties in Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*. In that novel, "Hole and Corner Buffery" is the title of an anti-Buff editorial by Mr. Pott, the bombastic editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*.

Sir, – I have read with a pained surprise your foot-note to Dr. Iddings Bell's letter in your issue of January 12. His remarks, as quoted by you in an earlier issue, do not seem to have made a deep impression upon me, as I have quite forgotten what you quoted him as having said. I dare say that I would disagree with him as strongly as you do. But Dr. Bell affirms that his arguments were "grotesquely misrepresented"; and I should have thought that, if it was an "unpleasant duty" to quote him, it was equally a duty, though perhaps equally unpleasant, to rebut the charge of misrepresentation. And however grossly mistaken Dr. Bell's views may be, I entertain the hope that they will not "alienate for ever" (for ever is a long time) his English friends, or induce them to forget his previous good works and good words. Only evidence of genuine malignity or dishonesty on his part could be sufficient to justify such violence of condemnation.[2]

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
[T. S. ELIOT]

NOTES

1. See, in particular, "War," in the American Anglo-Catholic magazine *The Living Church*, 101 (8 Nov 1939), 2-3. Extensive controversy over American neutrality – which the Episcopalian hierarchy generally supported – preceded Bell's intervention. The war, he argued, was not being waged "for moral principle but rather to see if Great Britain shall continue to exercise economic domination over Continental Europe or if Germany is to take her place in such control" (2). To Bell, who saw little difference between the two sides, the "*real* struggle" was "between God and secularism, and not this *relatively insignificant* brawl going on in Europe" (3; italics in original).

2. Dark replied to TSE on 18 Jan: "There has been absolutely no misrepresentation of [Bell], only exact quotation, and it was an unpleasant duty to refer to the matter, because he was for some years the American correspondent of *The Church Times*." To back his claims, Dark sent TSE a copy of Bell's letter to the *Living Church*. On 25 Jan, TSE wrote Bell about his exchange with Dark, concluding, "I must say that on the one hand I still think Sidney Dark's tone unparliamentary, and I am not, of course, so scandalized by your remarks as he seems to have been. I do think that you have been silly, and that you [have] fallen into the same 'disastrous facility for over-simplification of political problems' that you reprehend." He reported the gist of this reproof to Dark on the same day, adding, "I think, however, if I may say so, that it is wise to ignore this kind of vapouring, unless one is going to meet it with superior argument."

Mr. H. G. Wells and Christianity

To the Editor of *The Guardian*

The Guardian: The Church Newspaper (26 Jan 1940) 43

Sir, – I am afraid that the correspondence in your columns from Mr. H. G. Wells and his critics, if it continues, is in danger of pursuing a direction which the occasion does not warrant, and ending in nothing but acrimony.[1] I cannot find anything in Mr. Roberts's letter to justify Mr. Wells's accusation of mock humility; and I am not hasty to join Mr. Murry in the charge of lack of charity.[2] But I think that Mr. Roberts is chiefly responsible for the discussion taking the wrong course, by having written, not about Mr. Wells's letter, but about Mr. Wells. The letter itself is all that the correspondence should be concerned with. For Mr. Roberts to make his point in that context, he would have to show, not merely that Mr. Wells's origins and education explain the views expressed in his letter, but that the letter could not have been written by a man of very different origin and education. I can, however, think of men, who according to ordinary standards have had every advantage – even members of Mr. Roberts's university,[3] and not scientists but men who have distinguished themselves in the Classical Tripos – who could have written substantially the same letter: and therefore I submit that Mr. Wells's education is not relevant. Incidentally, I regret to observe, from the heat of the subsequent correspondence, that the term "lower middle-class" seems to be taken, not as a simple label of status, but as a term of reproach or abuse: I hesitate to believe that Mr. Roberts so intended it.[4]

The interesting point at issue is whether it is so easy as Mr. Wells seems to think, to erase a word like "God" from one's vocabulary, without substituting some other word to do duty for it. Since early times men have arisen to proclaim that there was no God: it is quite a different thing to assert that the *word* "God" "conveys no positive meaning at all." It very likely does not mean any of the number of things which Mr. Wells will allow to be meant: but I wonder whether Mr. Wells should not be led to expunge also most words of philosophical meaning, and all propositions that do not pass the censorship of logical positivism. It would be interesting to have a list of all the words of which, on careful thought, Mr. Wells would be obliged to "drop the use."

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Declining the *Guardian*'s invitation "to contribute to our series of theological articles entitled 'God in History,'" Wells had written, in a letter published 5 Jan 1940, "I find the word 'God' too ambiguous for discussion; it may mean anything from a small brass object to a mathematical formula, and I have dropped the use of it. I regret I ever used it" (8). To this, Michael Roberts had retorted on 12 Jan: "The word 'God' is certainly ill-defined: so are the words 'time,' 'matter' and 'reality,' and all the other terms used in describing the world of experience." Like "other products of the secondary schools and the modern universities," according to Roberts, Wells was "less familiar with the philosophical tradition of Aquinas, Ockham, Pascal, Kierkegaard" than with scientific thought. In this, he was "typical of the secondary school-boys of our age," who "in philosophy and theology . . . have no training at all beyond the intellectual level of a five-year-old" (19).

2. Wells had responded on 19 Jan both to Roberts's argument and to his tone: "And whatever the quality of his training may have been, surely something a little underbred about it betrays itself in his eager resort to insult." In the same issue, Middleton Murry, while agreeing with Roberts in substance, rebuked him for failing "the duty of [a] Christian critic to behave towards [Wells] with charity" (31). Michael Roberts (1902-48) was a poet, scholar, and educator. His anthologies *New Signatures* (1932) and *New Country* (1933) featured the work of the Auden group. TSE subsequently invited him to edit *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936) and solicited him as a poetry reviewer for the *Criterion*.

3. TSE presumably means Cambridge, where Roberts took a bachelor of arts in mathematics at Trinity College (1925), though Roberts had also taken a bachelor of science in chemistry at King's College London (1922).

4. Roberts had stated that Wells, a product of his modern technical education, "voluntarily submits to the totally unnecessary intellectual handicap from which most of our lower middle-classes suffer."

Christian Society

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 16 (1 Feb 1940) 226-27

Sir, – When, as Mr. Reckitt reminds me, I "welcomed the possibility of a discussion which must occupy many minds for a long time," I did *not* mean that I hoped that people would continue to discuss my book for a long time; and I write now, not for the purpose of provoking a fresh burst of correspondence, but to make a few observations in retrospect.[1]

I am grateful to Mr. Reckitt for drawing attention to more than one obscurity in my phrasing. It is always possible that a statement which is misunderstood in different ways by everybody, may still be the only way in which the thought could be put: but any statement which is misunderstood in the same way by different people is one that ought to be re-framed. I therefore agree that my sentence about the natural and supernatural end of man should be re-written, now that Mr. Reckitt seems to understand what I meant (or rather, what I did not mean) by it. In his letter in your issue of January 18, Mr. Reckitt cites two more sentences which must be blue-pencilled.

It should by now be clear that I was trying to limit myself to the *minimal* requirements in a society before it could be *called* a Christian society; and that I should not necessarily be satisfied with what I had outlined. It was, perhaps, misleading to speak of a "community of men and women, not individually better than they are now," since I was unable to make clear that the real gulf to be bridged, from the point of view taken up throughout the essay, was not that between the spiritually backward and the spiritually advanced individual, but between one and another kind of collective attitude. The difficulty about my other sentence "Social customs would take on religious sanctions" is of another sort. I was only attempting to suggest what I thought was sure to happen in my society, not what I advocated and approved; and I did indicate elsewhere that it would be the business of the Church – primarily in the sense of the hierarchy – to check such identifications from going too far.

I did not mean to imply, anywhere, that any Christian, by reason of being engaged in manual labour, or on any other ground, was "absolved" from the obligation of prayer and self-improvement in the spiritual life.[2] I repeat, I was concerned with minimal requirements. If you say that my requirements were so modest that the result – however superior to our present situation – would not produce anything that could justifiably be called a "Christian society," I can only say that I think you must abandon altogether the hope for a Christian society, and limit your thinking to the possibilities of a Christian community within a non-Christian one.

I am not obstinately attached to the term "pagan," as the alternative to "Christian."[3] I shall be glad if anyone can tell me of a better: I wanted to avoid, as far as I could, using (or rather abusing) the term "secular."

I feel that I ought, in closing, to reply also to Dr. Peck, but, apart from the misunderstanding which he shared with Mr. Reckitt, and which I am grateful to him for exposing, I find him much more difficult to understand.[4] I do not know what he means by "fundamental democracy." It does not seem to me that I denied to the masses of the people their Christian instruction. I do not think that I asserted that *anyone* on earth was incapable of the vision of God. I hold no predestinarian theory of damnation. Dr. Peck seems to regard me as suspiciously as if I was an affable stranger in a smoking compartment trying to inveigle him into a new game of cards: I hope that he may come to be reassured about my intentions.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE's letter follows a series of comments on *ICS* in the *NEW*, beginning with Maurice Reckitt's respectful review, "A Sub-Christian Society?" (7 Dec 1939, 115-16), to which George Every, W. G. Peck, and V. A. Demant responded. Reckitt's main criticism of the book focused on its vision of Christian life for the "great mass" of humanity, of which TSE had written: "the religious life of the people would be largely a matter of behaviour and conformity" (5.700). To Reckitt, "a religion which expects no more than this, nothing more elevated, nothing more heroic, from the mass of its devotees can surely be little more than an official cult and a code of morals," and TSE's scheme therefore "represents no true idea of a Christian society" (116). On 14 Dec, TSE responded to this critique in "A Sub-Pagan Society?" (5.753). Reckitt rejoined the debate on 18 Jan 1940, expressing the hope that TSE would clarify his point about humanity's natural and supernatural ends in future editions of *ICS* while reiterating his doubt that TSE's vision "embodied the demands which Christianity must make if it is to remain itself" (199). Reckitt's letter, which prompted TSE's present response, quoted *ICS*: "the following pages [are] an individual contribution to a discussion which must occupy many minds for a long time to come" (5.683).

2. Laborers, Reckitt wrote, "are no more to be absolved of spiritual exercises and religious endeavour . . . than those who serve God with their minds," and that "no vocation can . . . excuse

men from the ardours of prayer." He was responding here not to TSE, however, but to George Every, who wrote in support of TSE on 21 Dec 1939. Every argued that "even in a Christian society there may be some who do not live the religious life and acknowledge only the natural end of man. The lay-brother in a religious community who is a carpenter or a gardener realises his religion largely through his work. He thinks and prays with his hands. He conforms to a traditional way of life which has grown up before him and around him" (152).

3. Reckitt's review of *ICS* criticized TSE's use of the term "pagan" to designate non-Christian modern societies, "a convention unworthy of his precise diction" (115). TSE defended his usage in his 14 Dec response. In his letter of 18 Jan, Reckitt returned, "I have certainly no desire to be pernickety about the word 'pagan,' though I feel that a term explicitly describing a pre-Christian condition is not the right one by which to suggest an attitude consciously hostile to a long-established faith" (199).

4. William George Peck (1883-1962) began his career as a Methodist minister and was ordained as an Anglican priest under the influence of the socially engaged Free Catholic movement. Like Reckitt, Peck disputed TSE's claim that, in a Christian Society, "the natural end of man – virtue and well-being in community – is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end – beatitude – for those who have the eyes to see it" (5.700). "It is the glory of Catholic Christianity," Peck averred in a letter published 4 Jan 1940, "that it believes in the common man; believes every man capable of seeing the vision of God." In TSE's Christian Society, by contrast, the "unseeing multitudes" would be "governed by a few vision-beholding highbrows." To Peck, "the Christian dogma of man inevitably involves fundamental democracy," and in a Christian Society, the "masses of people" must have "some kind of Christian instruction and [would be] in some definite relation to the Church and the sacraments" (168).

Views and Reviews: Journalists of Yesterday and Today

The New English Weekly, 16 (8 Feb 1940) 237-38

No one can have failed to observe that since the beginning of this war two men, whom we had thought of as slowly and unwillingly retiring from public life, have emerged into a glare of prominence. I mean Mr. Churchill and Mr. Wells. They must be nearly contemporary; they were both men of celebrity, I remember, when I was a freshman.[1] Both have spoken and written a great deal in the last thirty-odd years; neither possesses what one could call a *style*, though each has a distinct idiom: that of Mr. Wells being more like a durable boiler suit, and that of Mr. Churchill more like a court dress of rather tarnished grandeur from a theatrical costumier's.[2] I do not know what they have in common, except that at an age when one would expect them to be withdrawing to the contemplative life, they are embarking on new and furious careers. I do not speak in disparagement: I do not suggest that either of them ought to retire – on the contrary. Nobody needs retire until the world is so changed that he has nothing to say to it. The interesting thing is that the world has not changed; that Mr. Wells and Mr. Churchill can go on because there is still a public for them to direct – and because there is no one else to direct it. The situation is so odd that it is worth a moment's consideration.

My own generation does not seem to have produced either a great demagogue – such as have been Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George – or a great journalist – such as have been Mr. Wells, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Chesterton. I am not, in this context, using either term, "demagogue" or "journalist," in any but the most favourable sense. Of men highly gifted for journalism – in this most favourable sense – there have been several. For instance, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, Mr. Middleton Murry and Mr. John Macmurray all have the necessary fluency, earnestness and desire to influence as large an audience as possible; and Mr. Lewis, at least, is unquestionably a writer of as great genius as Mr. Wells. Yet none of them has ever been listened to by more than a minority public; and as for the men of my time who have been able to capture a large audience, I believe they are all, by comparison with Mr. Wells, pygmies. By individual comparison of gifts alone, ample reason can be found for Mr. Wells's success. Mr. Wells started as a popular entertainer, and his advantages of education gave him the opportunity to exploit "popular science" for a generation all ready to suspend disbelief in favour of this form of romance. To this paying activity he brought imagination of a very high order: some of his short stories, such as "The Country of the Blind," and certain scenes from his romances, such as the description of sunrise on the moon in *The First Men in the Moon*, are quite unforgettable.[3] Later, he employed remarkable gifts as a recorder in chronicles of the sort of society in which he took his origins. Through being a popular entertainer, he found an opening as a prophet – the nearest parallel in the last few years is Miss Dorothy Sayers.[4] None of my contemporaries of a distinction at all comparable to that of Mr. Wells has started by this popular appeal of entertainment. And I think that this is more than a personal difference; it is the difference of a generation.

The world into which Mr. Wells – and the late Arnold Bennett – arrived (the same world, really, as that of Lord Stamp) was a world of "getting on."[5] For the ambitious youth of literary gifts and humble origins, the first thing – sensibly enough – was to make a living by giving the public its entertainment; when one had got sufficiently established, then one might be free, either to devote oneself to a work of literary art, or to preach openly to a public which is docile and respectful to success. In the course of this rough experience Mr. Wells probably learned a number of things about writing – about "putting over" ideas to the large public – which his juniors have never learnt. He also suffered, because of his period, in a way in which younger men have not suffered. He exhibits, for example, a curious sensitiveness about his origins: in a recent contribution to the *Fortnightly* he rebukes the younger generation for grudging him in middle age the modest competence which is no more than his due in consideration of his straitened youth.[6] I cannot help comparing him here with the man whom I consider the greatest journalist, in the best sense of the term, of my time: Charles Péguy. Péguy was a peasant, and makes you feel that he took a deep pride in his origins. But the difference between Mr. Wells and my own generation is of another kind. I cannot think of any good English writer of my generation who is either sensitive because of being humbly born, or who puts on airs because of being well born: the distinction is of no interest among writers. Perhaps it is partly that we have found ourselves in a position in which "getting on" was always out of the question. There was nowhere to get to. That kind of success, for a serious man of letters, is no longer possible.

The serious journalism of my generation is all minority journalism. That is more than a difference between Mr. Wells and my contemporaries; it is a difference between the worlds into which they were born. The crowd of season-ticket holders is still there – it is bigger than ever – reading Mr. Wells's latest in the first class as well as the third class compartment: he tells them what they are ready to accept, and part of what he says is true. His great imaginative gifts, and picture-book method, make very real to his public the situation that he describes; and as he does not reason, or draw upon any kind of wisdom inaccessible to the common man, he imposes no great strain upon the minds of his readers. And as his proposals are always in world terms, he does not ask of his readers individually any great exertion from which they would flinch. On the other hand – and this is perhaps something to be mentioned in common with Mr. Churchill after all – he is capable of a kind of bluntness which is far too rare among the loud-speaker voices of our time. Like Mr. Churchill, he is capable of putting his foot into it again and again; and this capacity for rudeness is more endearing, in the long run, than the cautious, diplomatic politeness of the people who are so careful never to put their feet into anything. There is something very refreshing about Mr. Wells's violent hostility to Christianity in general and to the Catholic Church in particular; and his words about the American attitude towards the war, and our attitude towards America, in the *Fortnightly* article already cited, are worth all the suave palaver and exasperating preachments to which other publicists treat that country.[7]

There is, I believe, no place for a modern Wells to educate the public in more modern opinions. Our public is not yet in existence. We can only hope to provide thought of a very different kind and very different tendency, formed in very different categories, for a small number of thinking people prepared for new "dogma" (in Demant's phrase).[8] This is not to maintain an attitude of aloofness, but a realistic view of the limits of our possible effectiveness. We can have very little hope of contributing to any immediate social change; and we are more disposed to see our hope in modest and local beginnings, than in transforming the whole world at once. On the other hand, though the immediate aims are less glittering, they may prove less deceptive: for Mr. Wells, putting all his money on the near future, is walking very near the edge of despair; while we must keep alive aspirations which can remain valid throughout the longest and darkest period of universal calamity and degradation.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. By 1906-07, TSE's freshman year at Harvard, Wells, then forty years old, had been famous for a decade thanks to his early science-fiction and nonfiction best sellers. Churchill, who was thirty-two, had already embarked on his political career; however, he was then best known as a war correspondent and military memoirist.

2. boilersuit (UK): a one-piece garment with full sleeves and legs; OED gives first mention in a 1928 newspaper. Variations were worn by Churchill and others during air raids.

3. "The Country of the Blind," first published in 1904, was collected in *The Country of the Blind and Other Stories* (1911); TSE discussed this story in his 1933 Harvard course, English 26 (4.764). In *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), Wells portrays a lunar dawn in chapter 7, "Sunrise on the Moon."

4. The detective novelist Dorothy L. Sayers was also a noted Christian humanist and the author of several plays on Christian themes, including *The Zeal of Thy House* (1937) and *The Devil to Pay* (1939) – both written for the Canterbury Festival – and *The Man Born to Be King* (1942), a popular series of radio plays on the life of Jesus.

5. Born in 1880, Josiah Stamp was in fact only eight years older than TSE. The son of a shopkeeper, Stamp "got on" first in civil service – he joined Inland Revenue as a clerk at age sixteen and worked his way up, over a twenty-year period, to assistant secretary of the department – and then in business and banking.

6. In the third part of "The New World Order: Whether it Is Attainable, How it Can Be Attained, and What Sort of World a World at Peace Will Have to Be" (*The Fortnightly*, 153 [Jan 1940], 34-54), Wells wrote: "It has been my absurd experience to encounter noisy meetings of expensive young men at Oxford, not one of them stunted physically as I was by twenty years of under-nourishment and devitalized upbringing, all pretending to be rough-hewn collarless proletarians in shocked revolt against my bourgeois tyranny and the modest comfort of my declining years, and reciting the ridiculous class-war phrases by which they protected their minds from any recognition of the realities of the case" (40). Later in 1940, the three parts of Wells's article were published together as a book with the same title.

7. Europeans, according to Wells, "think that 'America,' which they imagine as a large single individual, . . . kept out of the war to the very limit of decency, overcharged us for munitions that contributed to the common victory, and made a grievance because the consequent debt was not discharged. They talk like that while Americans talk as if no English were killed between 1914 and 1918 (we had 800,000 dead) until the noble American conscripts came forward to die for them (to the tune of about 50,000)" (44-45).

8. In *The Religious Prospect* (London: Frederick Muller, 1939), Demant argues "that a revived understanding of Christian dogma is indispensable if the Church is to have a living word for the moment, and that it will be through that presentation of the faith alone which can use its dogma to interpret temporal history that Christianity will push into the future" (18-19). "Dogma" is among Demant's keywords throughout the book. TSE wrote in the preface to *ICS* that he was indebted "to writings of the Revd. V. A. Demant (whose *Religious Prospect* has appeared too recently for me to have made use of it)" (5.683). He reviewed the book in his "Commentary" for the *NEW* of 5 Oct 1939 (5.679).

Views and Reviews: On Going West

The New English Weekly, 16 (15 Feb 1940) 251

The second number of "Horizon," a monthly literary magazine of which the first number appeared in January, gives assurance that this is a periodical which ought to be supported.[1] And when I say support, I mean that the best way in which people of modest means can support literature, is to *subscribe* to reviews of this kind – to subscribe to anything, in these days, which preserves any independence, whether you like its opinions or not. People always seem to expect other people to do the subscribing; but it is the subscriptions, not the casual sales, that make independent journalism possible. The early numbers of any magazine like this are apt to suffer from the necessity of a show of names; we are inclined to expect the eminent names to be appended to distinguished pieces of work; and the well-known authors do not always have anything first-rate on hand for the occasion. Mr. Louis MacNeice, in a poem "Dublin," is not at his best: he has dropped into a sentimental-nostalgic Irish vein [122-23]. Sir Hugh Walpole, on his own level, is always dependable; there is a good typical Barker poem; Cecil Day Lewis has produced an admirable piece of translation from the Fourth Georgic; and there is a very perceptive note on Katherine Mansfield by K. J. Raine.[2] None of this is very exciting, perhaps; but what matters for such a paper is not that it should start with a bang, but that it should go on, purring like a kettle. What matters is the staying power of the editors.

It is too early to judge Mr. Stephen Spender's private journal from one instalment; and it is too early to judge Mr. Cyril Connolly's "Comments" which are still largely at the manifesto and apologetic stage.[3] But the author of *The Rock Pool* has urbanity – I might have said "civility," in a sense which Mr. Connolly will recognise – and an occasional engaging frankness which is perhaps given more force by being, in the well-worn phrase, "barbed with malice." Such malice, if it may be called that, is rare and refreshing, and may come from the other side of the Irish Channel: I am not yet, so far as I am aware, in a position to know what it feels like to Mr. Connolly's victims; but so long as it is entirely irresponsible and disinterested it is a journalistic asset.[4] When Mr. Connolly has got over retorting to anonymous critics, and defending the cover design, etc., I look forward to reading his comment.

And I hope that the magazine will not become a social Reservation of any kind. The editors would do well to look up the early numbers of *Life and Letters*, as an indication of the kind of thing to avoid.[5]

What impelled me to speak of *Horizon* at this stage was, primarily, some editorial remarks of Mr. Connolly's about the future of England and America, eliciting certain assumptions that are sometimes made and not always examined. Mr. Connolly, it is true, does not commit himself to any opinion; so that it is not his view, but a view that may easily come to be taken for granted, that I should like to question. It is the view that, as the result of this war, or of the whole mess in which this war may be only one episode, Civilisation is fatally certain to move westwards; that no further discoveries in the arts are to be expected from Europe; and that the next burst of creative activity is to be looked for, sooner or later, in New York, or in Los Angeles, or somewhere in between.[6] As Mr. Connolly says,

> Whatever happens in the war, America will be the gainer. It will gain enormously in wealth, and enormously (through the refugees) in culture. England will be poverty-stricken, even in victory, and will have either to be a poor reactionary state, a Victorian museum piece, like Hungary or Austria, or a poor progressive country, like Denmark or Scandinavia. [69]

So far as such a view is held in America, and gives comfort and hope to Americans, I have no wish to disturb it. As for the "refugees," they are there for various reasons – some of the ablest from Central Europe are there because England had nothing to offer them – and that is their private affair. They are there to get away from Europe: I doubt if any of them has gone for the purpose of muscling in on a Renaissance. Whether their presence will benefit American culture any more than their continued activity at home would have done, is I think very doubtful except so far as, like the Huguenots in England, they breed there in numbers and intermarry with the natives – and the proportion of refugees to natives is not likely to be very large. I agree that it is more than probable that Britain, and the rest of Europe, will be beggared and exhausted: we may, under a pressure of necessity which is stronger than that of common sense, come to a new conception of the meaning of wealth and of the means to distribute and conserve it. Anything may happen. But there are at least three alternatives to the emigration of "Civilisation" to America. It might, after all, stop where it is. It might spring up, let us say, among the Balkan States – societies which are in some respects younger, fresher and less industrialised than that of the

United States. And, equally likely, Civilisation might just disappear everywhere: though we hope that Italians will go on singing their operas superbly and producing excellent cream-ices. One thing that Civilisation has never done yet, is to pass from a parent to a colonial society: unless you maintain that Alexandrian philosophy and Sicilian poetry are superior or equal to those of Athens. Civilisation passed, in a sense, from Rome to mediaeval and modern Europe – but only after new races had developed new languages. I do not say that what Mr. Connolly suggests may not happen. But it seems odd (especially as a theory to appeal to Leftwingers) that Civilisation should pass from Europe to such a conservative country as the United States. I declare that the belief that it will, is so far only tenable as a *hope*; and as a hope it can be held in America. To hold it here, at this stage, is only to accept the most insidious form of defeatism.

Mr. Connolly proposes one alternative: the complete union of Britain and France.[7] But that is a solution which needs to be considered separately on its own merits.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *Horizon: A Review of Literature and Art*, founded and edited by the writer and critic Cyril Connolly (1903-74), appeared monthly for ten years and proved a successful and influential literary magazine. TSE's remarks pertain to the issue of Feb 1940.

2. Walpole, "Henry James: A Reminiscence" (74-80); George Barker, "Austrian Requiem" (72-73); Day Lewis, "The Fourth Georgic (lines 1 to 66)" (81-83); Raine, "Rev. of *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield*" (139-41). Kathleen Jessie Raine (1908-2003) was an English poet and critic.

3. Spender, "September Journal" (102-21); Connolly, "Comment" (68-71). Connolly's one novel, *The Rock Pool*, was published in 1936 after being rejected by Faber & Faber, among others.

4. Born in Coventry and educated at Eton and Oxford, Connolly was not in fact Irish; however, he did have family connections on "the other side of the Irish Channel" through his Anglo-Irish mother. On his background, see his *Enemies of Promise* (1938), which mixes literary and cultural criticism with autobiography.

5. *Life and Letters*, published from 1928 to 1935, was edited for most of its run by Desmond MacCarthy. Connolly was a frequent contributor, and *Horizon* was designed as a successor publication.

6. Connolly begins from the observation that "our best poet [and] our most promising novelist," Auden and Isherwood, have "abandoned England and are taking out naturalization papers in America – a country which artists up to a few years ago had fled in horror. . . . For the first time since the eighteenth century the English Refugee . . . is going West" (69). The last phrase supplies TSE's title for the present essay.

7. "The only alternative which would prove the English refugees to have been wrong would be the union of England and France into a single state . . . so that English workers would commute from sunny dormitories in the Cevennes, and the Anglo-Saxon spirit, humid with sentimental evasion and the South-West wind, be clarified by marriage to the Latin intellect" (69-70).

Mr. H. G. Wells and Religion

To the Editor of *The Guardian*

The Guardian: The Church Newspaper (16 Feb 1940) 79

Sir, – I do not know how to please Mr. H. G. Wells. I wrote a letter to defend him against Mr. Michael Roberts, and all he does is to growl at me for using the word "scientist" – a word which, it seems, must go into the waste-paper basket with "God."[1] I must explain that I did not use the word "scientist" as a term of opprobrium, and that I was not applying it to Mr. Wells.

I did not intend to argue with Mr. Wells; I must pay him the compliment of saying that he is an interesting subject to talk about. He has a great deal to say to which it is worth our while to listen; but I think that we can profit better from what he says, if we recognize him, not as an "advanced thinker," but as an honest and gallant defender of the ideas of fifty years ago. And I am by no means suggesting that the ideas of fifty years ago are all wrong.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] In reaction to TSE's letter of 26 Jan to the *Guardian* (6.5), Wells, on 2 Feb, ridiculed the "strange delusion that there is a specific sort of people of an objectionable mental quality called 'scientists'. . . . Why argue against such pretentious silliness?" (55).

[2] Further correspondence in this series includes contributions on 9 Feb from A. D. Lindsay, Michael Roberts, Edmund Hope, R. G. Jackson, and H. K. Hudson (67-68); and from Wells, whose final words – which add nothing to his contretemps with TSE – appear together with the present item and a letter from H. L. Bowen.

Education in a Christian Society

To the Editor of *The Christian News-Letter*

The Christian News-Letter, 20 (13 Mar 1940) Supplement [1-4]

My Dear Oldham,

My only justification for attempting to write about education in a Christian society is that no one else has so far done so.[1] The problems of education in a secular society – but perhaps the right word is neither *secular* nor *pagan*, but *infidel*[2] – have been dealt with again and again by those who can speak from vocation, knowledge and experience; and some of the writers who speak with authority on these problems are men of strong Christian convictions. And the subject of religious instruction in schools, under contemporary conditions, is receiving a good deal of attention. My subject is education in a society which should be Christian in the sense and to the degree indicated in my book *The Idea of a Christian Society*. I was not there concerned with the means to be employed to bring such a society into existence: and I am not here concerned with the means of realising a Christian education. Yet I maintain that it is well to have some notion of where we want to go before we arrange to start upon a journey; and, accordingly, while I am concerned with the end and not the means, I believe that our conception of the end should not be wholly without influence upon our action.

WHAT IS OUR END?

The lack of any clear notion of the end seems to me to impair much contemporary discussion of education. One error into which we may fall is that of assuming that our social framework is always going to be what it has been and elaborating our reforms within that frame: this might be described as an attempt to give our fathers and grandfathers a better education – and our fathers and grandfathers are no longer in need of any re-education that we could give them. The other mistake, and one to which in these times we are more prone, is to plan for a "changing world" – but on the assumption, that we all too readily make, that we have a pretty shrewd idea of what the changes are going to be. This form of gambling has the disadvantage that however the world changes – and I concede that our world is likely to change with great rapidity – a great deal of the change will be unexpected, and some of it unrecognised when it comes. It is like cutting clothes for a child which is growing fast, but not at a steady rate and in regular proportions: the child will always be finding itself in a new suit which doesn't fit, and which never will fit. All that we can say for such reforms is that, if they do not give us a better education, they will at least give us one which is not wrong in the same respects. Prudence advises us to restrict our reforms to patching and changing here and there, not committing ourselves to a desperate hazard on what the future is going to be like. But at the same time reason counsels us to avoid surrendering ourselves either to a present which is already past or to a future which is unknown, and to look below the surface of apparent fixity or inscrutable change in search of those educational values which can be regarded as permanent. We hear a good deal of "social philosophy" and of the "philosophy of education," as well as of the "sociological attitude": but if the philosophy is to be more than a philosophy of flux, it must endeavour to determine what are these permanent values.

THE ESSENTIAL VALUES

I suggest that the values which we most ignore, the recognition of which we most seldom find in writings on education, are those of Wisdom and Holiness, the values of the sage and of the saint. I have no need, in the *Christian News-Letter*, to attempt to define these terms; but it is as well to remind ourselves, that there are innumerable people to-day to whom the terms would be meaningless even if I defined them. In the East, and in pre-Christian Europe, the sage and the saint have been hardly distinguishable from each other. We must recognise the truth in both the Oriental and the Christian views. In the East, it must be remembered, the sage as the educated man at the highest stage – the *sadhu*, or *mahatma*, or whatever other word you use – was a person who had educated his emotions and sensibility, as well as his mind, by the most arduous application to study.[3] The Christian West, on the other hand, while ready to recognise and to canonise the union of intellectual and spiritual excellence in one person (St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross are two types of such union) has held a doctrine of divine grace unknown to the Orient, and has always recognised saintliness in the humble and unlearned as well. I believe, of course, that Christianity is right; but Christianity in its decayed forms could learn much from the East. For our tendency has been to identify wisdom with knowledge, saintliness with natural goodness, to minimise not only the operation of grace but self-training, to divorce holiness from education. Education has come to mean education of the mind only; and an education which is only of the mind – of the mind in its restricted modern sense – can lead to scholarship, to efficiency, to worldly achievement and to power, but not to wisdom.

What is known as "education for culture" and what is known as "character-building" are the atrophied vestiges of wisdom and holiness. In a Christian Society we should not educate primarily either for culture or for character; but culture and character might be by-products of our education, as technical efficiency would be incidental to it.

THREE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

In this context I may refer to the classification of Max Weber, which, as I only know it at second hand, I should be diffident in mentioning, but that it may be known to readers of this paper from Professor Clarke's *Education and Social Change*.[4] Weber distinguishes three main types of education throughout history: *charismatic education, education for culture, specialist education*. I shall not criticise such a classification without having read the defence of it, which no doubt the inventor gives. As an account of historical process from primitive times to the present day, it may be very satisfactory within the author's frame of reference. The term *charismatic education* does not sound very happy, inasmuch as "charismatic" means "pertaining to favour or grace from God"; and the relation between grace and education is not clear. But it probably meant more to Professor Weber than it does to Professor Clarke: to whom, in the book I have just mentioned, it seems to mean hardly more than the practice by which Sir John Falstaff lost his voice – "hallooing and singing of anthems."[5] Professor Mannheim defines charismatic education clearly by saying that it

> is dominant in the magical period or in periods in which religion reaches its highest point. In the first case it wants to arouse hidden powers latent in man, in the second to awaken religious intuition and the inner readiness for transcendental experience. In both cases the predominant aim is not the transfer of a certain concrete content or skill but that of stirring up certain innate powers which are, if not superhuman, at least the limited possession of the chosen.[6]

I can hardly suppose that this is meant to comprehend the whole of the education of the "primitive races" any more than of the higher races in their religious phase; because in the highly organised societies of Polynesia, surely, you can find all three types of education, charismatic, cultural and specialized, very well co-ordinated. And in the higher religious education of India a great deal of what Mannheim, in the passage quoted above, calls "transfer of concrete contents" takes place: the study of the sacred Scriptures. Nevertheless, the category of charismatic education seems to approximate most nearly of the three to what I mean by the central values of Christian education – with this reservation, that it looks very different from the inside.

WHAT TYPE OF MAN?

At this point, I make no doubt, many readers will have come to the conclusion that I am quite prepared to dispense altogether, in the Christian Society, with everything that they know and value by the name of education – to the conclusion, in fact, that my goal is in effect a relapse into barbarism. I will say, therefore, in the hope that it may help, that I am not anxious to scrap anything, and that I recognise the need for laboratories and technical schools, as well as for institutions for the study of history and philosophy and ancient and modern languages, in any future society that I can desire or imagine. I am not envisaging, either, a society of saints or adepts. The important question is: What is the type of man which a society holds in highest honour? What is the type of man – below the heights of the greatest genius or of the greatest infusion of grace – which it is proudest to produce? Whatever ideals a society maintains (and it is not necessarily conscious of what its real ideals are) will insensibly influence its whole system of education, will affect the way in which it teaches, the way in which it acquires, the way in which it uses, the most apparently remote or specialised disciplines.

There is certainly no system to which we can go back. The ideals of *The Governour*, the ideals of John Locke, those of Thomas Arnold, are all equally exhausted and inapplicable to any future Christian society.[7] And while wisdom and holiness are, of course, unchanging, yet the technique of attaining them will change, and the technique of inculcating a right attitude toward them on the part of the vast majority of human beings who can attain as a minimum (and it is no small thing to attain) the right attitude toward them – the right attitude which is the starting point from which salvation may be come by.

The scope of education is no longer the task of merely training individuals in and for a society, but also the much larger task of training a society itself – without our having any fundamental accepted principles on which to train it. The scope of education has been rapidly expanding as social organisms have broken down and been replaced by the mechanisation which increases, while it manipulates, the atomisation of individuals.

IMMEDIATE REFORMS

There results a good deal of confusion of motives about the immediate reforms that are advocated. A case in point is that of the school-leaving age. I do not hold any fixed opinion as to what this age should be. I am quite prepared to be persuaded that under the conditions in which the greater part of our population lives, there is everything to be said for raising the age to 18.[8] I only suggest that we ought to consider whether it should not be our purpose to change these conditions, rather than merely adapt our system of education to them. It is better that boys and girls should be at school than that they should be subject to industrial exploitation, in an environment where family influence is negligible or even harmful, and where local community does not exist. But a change which is all to the good in certain circumstances is not necessarily a change for the better *absolutely*; and it makes all the difference whether we acknowledge that such a change is merely making the best of a bad job, or whether we pretend that it is good in itself. Is this further education necessarily going to make the majority wiser or better people?

I am excepting the number of those who possess the ability to acquire special techniques – as of the various kinds of engineering; assuming that their being trained to exercise this ability will be of advantage to society. But it is at least an open question, whether for the majority of human beings there is not an optimum amount of school instruction, and an optimum amount of knowledge, that they are able to acquire without excessive and deleterious strain. It is at least an open question, whether we cannot injure society and the individual as much by *over*-education, as by not providing enough.

I do not wish to prejudice the answers to such questions; I only say that they ought to be raised, and that they can only be rightly answered if we keep hold of the right ultimate values of education, and if we see the problems of education in right relation to the problems of society, and hold the right values there also.

OPPORTUNITY FOR WHAT?

I cannot help suspecting, however, that it is possible that education, in the meaning of the word which it has in contemporary society, is over-valued – by being contrasted simply with the *absence of itself*, and not with anything positive. With this thought in mind, I think that the claims of "equalisation of opportunity," and the "democratisation of education" ought to be scrutinised very carefully. I trust that no one will suppose me to be a defender of a social order and an educational system based upon income – the best thing to be said for which is that it manages to keep up some *pretence* of being based upon breeding. I am only apprehensive lest, as is so common in human affairs, we see the defects and dangers of the system we would institute less clearly than those of that which we would replace. The concept of "opportunity" can be a very dangerous one if we are not severe in our standards of what it is desirable to have opportunity *for*. Unless society can exercise some unconscious pressure upon its members to want the right things, the right life, the opportunity given may be merely the opportunity to follow false lights, the opportunity to follow aims for which the individual is unsuited, or which are not to the advantage of society. There will (I hope) always be a few individuals who will follow their own aims, independent of the social influences by which they are surrounded, unfettered by fear or flattery: it is probably to the advantage of society, even, that it should nourish a few anti-social people. But for the great majority, "opportunity" may be no more than opportunity to aim to excel (or at least keep their end up) at whatever the people with whom they associate think admirable. I am not the enemy of opportunity; I only say that in providing opportunity you are assuming a very grave responsibility. Unless, at least, you hold a doctrine of the natural goodness of man (and even so you can hardly avoid admitting the corruption of society) you have the responsibility of inculcating the right values.

Equalisation of opportunity, then, and democratisation of education, are in danger of becoming uncriticised dogmas. They can come to imply, as an ultimate, a complete mobility of society – and of an *atomised* society. I mean by this that many of those who hold these two principles may be unconsciously carrying them over from nineteenth-century liberalism – and in so far as they spring from liberalism they may end in totalitarianism. It is to think of the individual in isolation, apart from family and from local milieux, as having certain intellectual and sensitive capacities to be nurtured and developed to their full extent; and of a system of education as a vast calculating machine which would automatically sort out each generation afresh according to a culture-index of each child. The result might be to produce a race of spiritual nomads. Again, I wish only to raise issues, not to prejudice them. But it seems to me that there is a danger in simplifying the concept of society into the individual and the nation, and ignoring all the organic groupings in between; and it seems to me possible that in a healthy society there must be an element of fixity and an element of mobility, and that the problem lies in this adjustment.

These considerations may seem to have taken me far afield from the main point of this letter – the affirmation of the end values of Christian education as wisdom and holiness. I hope that anyone who makes this comment at this point may be persuaded to read again what I have said, and give me the benefit of another hearing; for I feel confident that it is only in the light of these two values that what I have just been saying can be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE's article is an indirect response to Geoffrey Vickers's "Educating for a Free Society," published in the *CN-L* of 31 Jan 1940 (Supplement [1-7]). The editor, J. H. Oldham, considered Vickers's essay especially significant and devoted an entire issue of the *CN-L* to it. TSE, in contrast, wrote Frank Morley on 25 Jan 1940: "Don't take the *Christian News Letter* too seriously. My chief job (along with Mairet and Demant, who are the two brightest boys) is to try to keep things out of it – but not always successful[ly], as you will see from a supplement on Education by a bird named Vickers. You can find out for yourself what I disliked in that." He may have been referring to the essay's secular perspective and its noncommittal references to "human values" and a "common faith."

Many of the issues raised in Vickers's essay are revisited here by TSE. He avoids any direct attack, however, for reasons that may be gauged from his remark to John Hayward on 20 Feb 1940 that he was planning "to write a supplement on Education for the *C.N.L.* which it probably won't print."

2. See TSE's earlier debate with Maurice Reckitt on TSE's use of the term "pagan" in *ICS* (5.753; 6.8).

3. A sadhu ("good man") is a Hindu ascetic; a mahatma ("great soul") is analogous to a Christian saint.

4. Max Weber (1864-1920), German sociologist and political economist. Versions of this classification appear in several of Weber's works, but see, especially, section 3, "The Typological Position of Confucian Education," in chapter 5 of *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (*Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* [1915]).

Fred Clarke (1880-1952), a regular participant in the Moot, was professor of education and director of the Institute of Education at the University of London. He first makes use of Weber's classification in "Some Notes on English Educational Institutions in the Light of the Necessities of 'Planning for Freedom' in the Coming Collectivized Regime," a paper prepared in 1939 for the Moot. This paper became the basis of *Education and Social Change: An English Interpretation* (1940), which was published as the third volume in *The Christian News-Letter Books*, a series sponsored by the journal.

Clarke's access to the classification was itself secondhand: he introduces it as the system "of Max Weber as quoted by Mannheim" (11-12). Mannheim's discussion of the three "types of education" would eventually appear in the concluding chapter of *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education*, a posthumous compilation of notes and lectures. Clarke – and TSE, who quotes from it below – must have encountered this passage in manuscript.

5. *2 Henry IV* I.ii.188-89. Clarke writes of "charismatic education" that "'Education by infusion of grace' perhaps best conveys the idea to those reared in a Christian tradition" (12). Weber defines it in *The Religion of China* (cited above) as education designed "to awaken charisma, that is, heroic qualities or magical gifts" that confer what he calls "charismatic authority" upon a leader (119; 30).

6. This passage would later be published, with minor alterations, in Mannheim's *Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 161.

7. Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named the Govournor* (1531), which TSE would soon quote in *East Coker*, promoted Humanist ideals in education, as John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) later promoted Enlightenment ideals. Thomas Arnold brought a nineteenth-century reformist zeal to his work as headmaster of Rugby (1828-41).

8. The school-leaving age, set by the Fisher Act of 1918, was then fourteen; the Butler Act, passed in 1944, would soon raise it to fifteen, though recommending a further increase to sixteen.

Modernism

To the Editor of *The Guardian*

The Guardian: The Church Newspaper (12 Apr 1940) 179

Sir, – By an accident I failed to see your issue of March 29 until a day or two ago. I was of course flattered to see a sentence of mine quoted in a letter from Mr. T. J. Wood, but considerably surprised to observe the use to which it was put.[1] My sentence proposed that we should treat Christianity with more *intellectual* respect. The rest of Mr. Wood's letter ascribes to my sentence, by implication, a very different meaning from that which I myself gave it. So far as I could discover, Mr. Wood was concerned, not with intellectual respect to Christianity, but with intellectual respect towards "the questions which modern knowledge has raised for the modern man."

I have no grievance against Mr. Wood for putting his own interpretation upon my sentence. A sentence once printed must stand upon its own feet, and bear the responsibility for any ambiguity lurking in its construction. But if this can happen within a few months of publication, what will happen in a hundred years? The future historian from Antipodes may set me down as a contemporary of Mrs. Humphry Ward, or as a zealous disciple of Dr. Benjamin Jowett.[2] What is the more likely fate is also perhaps the preferable – that my book should be completely forgotten.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

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NOTES

1. The Anglican clergyman Thomas John Wood (1886-1973) was Vicar of St. John the Evangelist, Clapham Rise (1924-40), organizing secretary of the Modern Churchmen's Union (1927-42), and the author of *Who Was Jesus? The New Testament Answer* (1939).

In a letter to the *Guardian* of 29 Mar 1940, Wood wrote: "The relevance of Christianity to the developing world-order has not yet been worked out, nor accepted, but if there is to be a Christian society we are reminded by Mr. T. S. Eliot that 'we must treat Christianity with a great deal more *intellectual* respect than is our wont; we must treat it as being for the individual a matter primarily of thought and not of feeling.' The indifference of the vast mass of the population of the Church is evidence of the failure to meet the real needs of the time, and I believe . . . that one of the most profound and urgent needs which the Church has not satisfied is that of an honest and intellectual answer to the questions which modern knowledge has raised for the intelligent man. Modernism is the attempt to meet that need; it may not have succeeded" (156). The quotation is from *ICS* (5.685).

2. A liberal theologian and reformist administrator at Oxford, Jowett was no master to the conservative TSE. The English novelist Mary Augusta (Mrs. Humphry) Ward (1851-1920) was a niece of Matthew Arnold. Her best-known novel, *Robert Elsmere* (1888), portrays an Anglican clergyman's crisis of faith.

3. Wood followed up by writing directly to TSE on 16 Apr 1940. In a polite reply on 19 Apr, TSE voiced the suspicion "that before we could come to an understanding we should have to go through a process of defining terms." He then questioned a number of Wood's phrases and assumptions, concluding that they revealed "fundamental difficulties of communication with which we are confronted."

[The Last Twenty-Five Years of English Poetry]

On 27 Feb 1940 TSE wrote to John Hayward that he was "considering an invitation from the British Council to go in May to Italy for a fortnight to lecture at six places from Palermo to Milan. I ask them what they want me to lecture about (I hope not Spender & Auden) and in what language, as I can't attempt Italian anyway." Among the subjects offered, he informed Hayward on 7 Mar, were "Eng. Metaphysical or religious poetry, and a modern subject. The last is difficult, because the point is to persuade the wops [Italians] that there is a terrific eruption of English poetry in our time." On 5 Apr TSE sent him "the first draft of my Italian lecture on Modern Poetry. It will have to be much rewritten and boiled down and punctuated with simple and pleasant poetry readings." He was supposed to leave on 20 May and return on or about10 June 1940, giving this and a second lecture, "Types of English Religious Verse" (6.46) at the British Institutes in Italy, but on 15 May he was advised by Robert Vansittart of the Foreign Office not to make the trip during wartime conditions: as TSE explained to Hayward, "it was not merely against my own interest, but against the public interest . . . because if I was mauled, the Ambassador would have to make a sharp protest, and that wouldn't make relations any easier." On Vansittart's advice, Allan Rose of the British Council cancelled the visit; the two lectures were never delivered or published.

The untitled typescript of twenty-three pages, misdated 1939, is archivally titled (King's).

The simplest way in which to understand the development of English poetry during the last twenty-five years, and the relative significance of those writers who have contributed to it, is to consider first what happens to any living language. A language that is not merely still spoken, but alive, is a language that is changing. It changes first in current speech, which reflects, often in very indirect ways, the social, material and spiritual changes happening to the people who speak it. The spoken language changes more rapidly than the written language; and the literary pioneers are those who, like Dante, dare to accept the vernacular speech and devote themselves to developing and refining it. One generation of poets put into circulation a particular idiom; the men who come after may improve it, and explore its further possibilities, without altering it. Sooner or later there comes a time when this poetic idiom is so out of date, so remote from the way men and women are talking, that it becomes a dead language no longer capable of expressing the thoughts and emotions of living men. The symptom of approaching death of a language and a civilisation is when men go on writing poetry in a style and vocabulary which has become meaningless to their less learned contemporaries. The task of poetic innovators, therefore, is to restore to verse the accents of living speech, and to give back to current speech, in exchange for what they take from it, a more highly developed instrument than men can fashion for themselves in the rough and ready use and traffic of conversation.

English poetry has been passing through one of these phases of renovation and change, phases which seem to tend to recur, under the conditions of modern civilisation, about once in a hundred years or a little more. With the revolutions of the past three hundred and fifty years, the names most representatively associated are those of Edmund Spenser, towards the end of the sixteenth century, of John Dryden a century later, and Wordsworth and Coleridge a century after him. As a background to the poetry of our time, I propose to consider the poetry of the nineteenth century as the development of the Romantic Movement of which Wordsworth and Coleridge were the pioneers. Thirty years ago, the first signs of another approaching change were visible in the work of the poets known as the Imagists.

The advantage of seeing the development of poetry in such a pattern does not consist in giving us any external clue to which are the greatest poets, but in enabling us to decide which poets are survivors of a previous age, which are mere imitators of a previous age, which are genuine innovators, and which are incapable of classification. Edmund Spenser, for example, was followed by Marlowe and Shakespeare, who were greater poets than he. But as a maker of verse he was the pioneer. The difference between his poetry and that which immediately preceded it, is astonishing; but on the other hand one can trace his influence through Marlowe on the versification of Shakespeare. In the lyric forms, the great innovator was John Donne. Poetry from the end of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth took the normal course of development and decay. The language which had begun in assimilation to the speech of a cultivated man, ended in fantastic artificiality. Dryden then began to write poetry which belonged to the spoken language; and a century later the language of Dryden was itself artificial and quaint. Such is the normal cycle of language: and in these terms I would invite you to consider modern English poetry, as belonging to that phase of the cycle at which poets are attempting to bring poetry into conformity with the speech of their day: in its content and vocabulary, to concern itself with what men actually feel and say and the ways in which they say them;

and in its metric and rhythms, with the inflexions of the contemporary voice.

I have suggested, a few minutes ago, that there is apt to be one generation of poets which effects a revolution, and two or three generations which exploit and perfect the discoveries of the pioneers. But in English poetry perhaps more than in any other, we must also allow for the occasional appearance of poets who do not fit into either category, and who may be denominated eccentrics. This is, I confess, a classification of my own, and you will not find all Professors of English Literature agreeing that such a class exists – still less will they all agree with my choice of poets to consign to it. For I should certainly include Milton as an eccentric. The characteristic of the type of poet I have in mind is a strongly developed personal idiom, which is neither traditional nor a new response to the conditions of a new age. It may be the case with a very great poet. I have sometimes been accused of maintaining that Milton was not a great poet, simply because I have affirmed that his influence on English verse was harmful: but whether a poet has a bad influence or no influence at all is irrelevant to the question of his greatness.[1] Milton wrote in a style which was remote from the speech of his time, but also remote from the speech of any other time: it was a language of his own; and therefore, when other people tried to talk it, they talked it very badly. William Blake was another eccentric, of a very different kind because obviously, they would not be so eccentric if there was any family resemblance between them.[2] To develop this thesis, I should have to take the whole hour: the point of my mentioning it here is that we shall meet, in modern poetry, besides survivors, imitators and pioneers, at least one great eccentric, Gerard Manley Hopkins; and I wish to prepare the way for him.

To return to the nineteenth century, I think that the generation after the Romantic Poets, including Tennyson, Matthew Arnold and Swinburne, was a generation concerned with exploiting the possibilities which had been opened up at the beginning of the century. We must make some exception in the case of Browning, who did attempt, perhaps prematurely, a more colloquial speech: I say prematurely, because he was largely engaged in trying to fill old bottles of verse forms with new wine of subject matter and vocabulary. Towards the end of the century, in the period we call the "Nineties," some younger men, partly under the influence of French models, did make some significant attempt to relate their verse to living speech. Owing to the fact that most of them died young, and the tide of mediocrity flowed on into the twentieth century, their achievement and their influence were not great; and they were too much themselves under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite school which preceded them, to arrive at a really new speech. In some of the poems of Ernest Dowson and Arthur Symons, in a verse or a line here or there of Lionel Johnson, there is a ring of the spoken voice. The best-known poem of Dowson's, "Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae,"[3] shows a mixture of the conventions of the age of Swinburne with a new and irregular rhythm:

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished, and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea! hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.[4]

There is in this the vague suggestive key words, as with Swinburne: "music," "wine," "feast"; and also the conventional poetic diction, as with the second person singular, and the "yea" – the Pre-Raphaelite idioms: but there is something more modern, more allied to speech, in the broken rhythm and the stanzas ending with the qualification "in my fashion."

The most important relation of that group of poets at the end of the last century, to our own time, is established by the youngest of them and their survivor, William Butler Yeats: but as Yeats's greatest poetry only began to appear in 1919, I shall treat him in a different context. At the beginning of this century there were three men, already of established reputation, who must be mentioned: Thomas Hardy, Robert Bridges, and Rudyard Kipling. They were all still writing and commanding attention, in the twenties of this century; Kipling's last poem is dated 1932. If only because of chronology, they must enter into our consideration. Thomas Hardy was, of course, a great novelist: he is also considered generally to have been a great poet. I am advancing an opinion for which I have no authority, in asserting that I cannot think of any great novelist who was also a great poet, or any great poet who was also a great novelist. In English, the nearest approximations seem to me to have been Sir Walter Scott and George Meredith – that is, great novelists who came very near to writing great poetry. I believe that the two arts are too nearly related, and at the same time too different, for any one man to reach the front rank in both. With Thomas Hardy, as with my own contemporary D. H. Lawrence, the best poems seem to me only notes for stories: Lawrence wrote his poems in a kind of rough free verse, and Hardy wrote in regular, conventional metres. But his form and language seem to me antiquated; and his chief influence upon a younger generation of poets seems to me to have been in helping to perpetuate, by his prestige and example, an outworn idiom among a certain number of younger men.

Robert Bridges, on the other hand, was a poet or nothing. In his earlier years he wrote a number of graceful lyrics, in a style somewhat reminiscent of the Elizabethans; towards the end of his life he wrote a very long poem, in a kind of quantitative metre of his own invention, called *The Testament of Beauty*, which has been, I suspect, more praised than read.[5] In spite of his metrical innovations, which have had but little influence, he was a traditional Victorian poet; and his greatest distinction is that, in the position of Poet Laureate, he maintained with dignity the status of the poet as craftsman. A number of younger men, who, owing to their annual appearance in a volume called *Georgian Poetry*, became known as the "Georgian Poets," perpetuated the traditional nineteenth-century style and subject matter of poetry with varying degrees of ability: twenty-five years ago the best known were Rupert Brooke and James Flecker – to-day the most distinguished has proved to be Walter de la Mare.[6] They were influenced by Hardy and by A. E. Housman. Their work hardly belongs to what I call "modern poetry"; I mention them as a reminder that there are no sharp chronological divisions, and that different kinds of poetry are written at the same time. But from 1910 to 1914 all the second-rate verse was in the style of the "Georgian poets"; nowadays the second-rate verse is quite different – and it is the style which uninspired writers choose to imitate that can be called the style of its time.

It may cause some surprise that I should mention Rudyard Kipling together with Hardy and Bridges. He is usually regarded as a great storyteller, a writer of short stories rather than a novelist, who turned out a good deal of verse of a popular jingling kind, concerned with topical matters rather than with the profounder subject matter of poetry. He is much more important than that, even though he can hardly be said to have influenced directly any significant younger poets. Technically, his verse is intermediate between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Spiritually, he was a writer of sometimes profound and occasionally prophetic vision. He is sometimes regarded as merely the bard of Empire – he is less well recognised as also a severe critic of England. Unlike the men whom I have just mentioned, he belongs to the Empire rather than to England. When he came as a boy to school, he came from India; and to him the Empire always had that concrete reality which most men can only find in the immediate area of their birth and early years. In his later life, he settled in Sussex, and his later tales are often concerned with local history. But the difference between Hardy's love of his native Dorset and Kipling's love of Sussex is very striking. Hardy's is rather the love of the peasant for his native soil; for the countryside and the country manners that he knew in childhood, and which were disappearing as he wrote: so that his whole work is tinged with a nostalgic regret for the past and the passing. Kipling's is the love for a countryside that he adopted, and for what that county had been throughout history; and the whole of history became an historical present to his imagination. And, through settling in and coming to know one small corner of England, his conception of Empire became enlarged and generalised. It became, as well, that of the Roman Empire which was symbolised for him by the Great North Wall which protected civilisation so long as the legions were there to defend it.[7]

Both in his versification, which often appears to have the artless unpretentiousness of the music hall song, but is highly inventive and skilful, and in his subject-matter, which was often that of the ordinary newspaper reader, Kipling helped to break down the Victorian conventions as to what was suitable material for poetry, and what were the possible ways in which to treat it. He did not accept the convention that the imagery of poetry should be drawn from the more charming aspects of English rural life. These were considerable services. I do not know anyone whose poetry was influenced by his, and my own opinion of his work has grown but slowly in appreciation. Perhaps some younger men, who have experimented with simple ballad forms, may owe something to his example; but whether he has had influence or not, he still deserves praise as a pioneer.

I have had to say something about these three men, Hardy, Bridges and Kipling, if only to isolate modern poetry from the work of an elder generation. The kind of verse which began to be written about 1910 or so made the same break with tradition that we find in that of Wordsworth and Coleridge. But it had its origins in the sources to which the younger men of that time went for inspiration. Some of these sources are to be found in the earlier symbolist poets of France; or to be precise, in Baudelaire and his immediate followers, Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud and Mallarmé. Some are to be found in English poetry, both dramatic and lyric, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is also an influence from Ireland – and it is only through Ireland that the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Nineties came to bear at all upon my own generation. And another important formative cause of the origins of modern poetry was the reciprocal influence of certain young English and American poets upon each other. The young American poets, who came to London about that time, had left a country in which the status of poetry had fallen still lower than in England: there was not one elder poet writing in America whose writing a younger man could take seriously. Their dissatisfaction with the current standards of verse reinforced that of their English contemporaries, in a common search of other literatures and other periods. It was a joint revolt against the second-rate, the Victorian derivative in language and in subject matter.

Out of such a group came what was called the Imagist movement. The tenets which this group formulated have long since been outgrown by all of those who have continued to write – it would certainly not apply to the more recent work of the most eminent of the American members, Mr. Ezra Pound. But, following French example, they found a literary movement in order, and one "ism" served perhaps as well as another to hold them together and to give them encouragement. The theory of poetry was certainly inadequate; it only really fitted what they themselves wanted to do; and in its emphasis upon purification of language and the creation of new metaphor it had little to say about the musical values of verse. It can only be understood in terms of what they wanted to get away from: the vague melody of Swinburne, with its lack of visual imagery, or the worn-out rustic scenery and conventional moralising inherited from Tennyson. The theorist of the school was T. E. Hulme, who was killed in 1917, and who left only five poems, any one of which will serve as a good illustration of the intentions and limitations of Imagism.

Once, in finesse of fiddles found I ecstasy,
In a flash of gold heels on the hard pavement.
Now see I
That warmth's the very stuff of poesy.
Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.[8]

This is not a perfect poem, and the last line is definitely weak in construction. But, in the world of 1910 or so, this and a dozen poems one might choose from the work at that time of Pound, Richard Aldington, H.D., [and] F. S. Flint, were evidence of a radical change in the whole practice of verse.

The disadvantage of the Imagist theory was that it could only be applied to very short poems of a very limited kind; and it had soon served its purpose. Imagism was a minority movement; and its only important influence has been through the later work of men associated with it. A few years later there were other evidences, none of them perhaps of the greatest importance in itself, but significant as hints that poetry was in a period of change. War cannot make major poets, though it may kill them: it can at best only give a particular direction and mood to their work. But the verse produced towards the end of that war was very different from that with which it began. That of Siegfried Sassoon is for the most part conventional in form, but has a realistic attitude which differentiated it from "Georgian Verse," and for which the public was ready. That of Isaac Rosenberg, killed in France, is certainly not derived from the pre-war style. And Wilfred Owen, also killed in action, rose to a few poems which show not only a new mood, but a striving for new technical media.[9] None of these poets had had any connection with the Imagists.

It is at this point – let us say, 1919 – that I must go back to two elder men whose importance only became manifest during the nineteen-twenties. I have already spoken of William Butler Yeats as having been a young member of the group of poets who flourished – no, flourished is hardly the word – during the eighteen-nineties. During the first years of this century he had spent his time between London and Dublin, and had been one of the leading spirits in the revival – or, I should call it, the creation of Irish literature. He took a friendly interest in the activities of younger men in this country as well: I think that a certain reciprocal influence between himself and Ezra Pound is visible. He was, in his own way, working at a kind of purification of language parallel to the attempt of the Imagists: with the background of an English-speaking country which was still predominantly agricultural, and where therefore the common speech preserved the element of poetic image and phrase which industrial society tends to suppress. He had been associated with such Irish poets as A.E. and with such Irish playwrights as Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge.[10] But up to the volume of 1919 his poetry still showed the strong influence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement which, as his autobiography tells, had constituted the intellectual world of his parents in London. I will read two passages, one from his early verse, and one from his later, in order to illustrate the difference between his early and his later style.

Who Goes with Fergus?

Who will go drive with Fergus now,
And pierce the deep wood's woven shade,
And dance upon the level shore?
Young man, lift up your russet brow,
And lift your tender eyelids, maid,
And brood on hopes and fear no more.

And no more turn aside and brood
Upon love's bitter mystery;
For Fergus rules the brazen cars,
And rules the shadows of the wood,
And the white breast of the dim sea
And all dishevelled wandering stars.[11]

This is much more exciting to me than any other English poetry of its period, but it is very obscure. I do not know what it is about, or who Fergus was; but he must belong to the Irish folklore and the occult imagery with which Yeats loaded his early verse. And though the rhythm is different from that of either Swinburne or Rossetti, there is still a kind of Pre-Raphaelite dreamy beauty about it. Now I will quote from his elegy upon his friend Major Robert Gregory – the son of Lady Gregory the dramatist, a man of great gifts, killed in action – from the 1919 volume. He is thinking of various dead friends:

And then I think of old George Pollexfen,
In muscular youth well known to Mayo men
For horsemanship at meets or at racecourses,
That could have shown how pure-bred horses
And solid men, for all their passion, live
But as the outrageous stars incline
By opposition, square and trine;
Having grown sluggish and contemplative.

They were my close companions many a year,
A portion of my mind and life, as it were,
And now their breathless faces seem to look
Out of some old picture-book;

I am accustomed to their lack of breath,
But not that my dear friend's dear son,
Our Sidney and our perfect man,
Could share in that discourtesy of death.

. . . .

When with the Galway foxhounds he would ride
From Castle Taylor to the Roxborough side
Or Esserkelly plain, few kept his pace;
At Mooneen he had leaped a place
So perilous that half the astonished meet
Had shut their eyes; and where was it
He rode a race without a bit?
And yet his mind outran the horses' feet.[12]

In gaining simplicity and directness, in avoiding the poetical, in approximating to normal unaffected speech, the poet has also gained intensity. That was one of the first of many poems of equal beauty between that year and his death in 1939. The change in his style may be partly due to influences, partly to his active life in Irish politics; but most of all to right aims and to hard work. If, as I believe, one of the characteristics of a major poet is capacity for lifelong development, Yeats had this sign.[13] And he must be mentioned, not only as a modern poet himself, but as one of the important influences upon the young men whose work began to appear about 1925.

Another great poet first became known generally about that year; but in my opinion his influence upon young men will prove more transient. Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844 and died in 1899; but his poems were not published (by his friend Robert Bridges) until 1918 – even then, in an expensive and rather scarce volume.[14] He is a Victorian, certainly, but such a highly individual one that I should place him among the "eccentrics." He was aloof from the popular currents of his time; and he was a Jesuit priest leading a religious life. The originality and the beauty of the verse, and often the greatness of the poetry, are uncontestable; though it has a certain resemblance to that of his contemporary George Meredith. Hopkins is I think the greater poet of the two.[15] His vocabulary and his metric are both very original. His influence has been that which one might expect of a powerful eccentric poet suddenly appearing complete: it was immediate, it was very patent, taking the form of imitation of his metres and his verbal ingenuities such as the fabrication of new compound words. I think it may be transient, but it cannot be overlooked in considering the writing of some of the younger poets. I will read a stanza from one of his best-known poems; but if you have not read it before, I should warn you that it is almost impossible to grasp the meaning of most of his poems at first hearing: all that anyone can do is to get the rhythm of it.

The Windhover
To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
  dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
  Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
  As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
  Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing![16]

It appears to be a kind of fusion of the image of a hawk seen in the air, and the thought of Our Lord. You will recognise that Hopkins is highly idiosyncratic; that although he is not traditional, his speech is his own peculiar speech, and not the common speech of his own or any period. In this respect, I should call him, in the French sense, a less classic poet than the later Yeats.

Before mentioning any of the younger generation of poets – who are mostly English, for America has not produced any outstanding work since the generation which began to write in 1910, and Ireland is still under the great shadow of Yeats – I wish to speak of modern versification in general. There are still many people in English-speaking countries, to whom the newer forms of verse seem to be only bad prose cut up into arbitrary lengths. In what sense, to what extent, have we a new form of versification?

The current practice of the best poets in English does not seem to me either to tend towards a new system of prosody or towards a kind of "free verse" so free that it is formless. It was natural and proper that the revolt against the antiquated should at the beginning break down the artificial barriers between poetry and prose, should fight against the tendency of a decrepit style to employ a different vocabulary, different imagery from that of prose and a rhythm removed from that of speech. But the movement has been rather towards recovering the metric of earlier times than inventing a new one. In the Latin language, the natural rhythms of the language were overlaid by a metric adopted from the Greek: and again, this classical Graeco-Latin metric has been imposed by classical scholarship upon English. To read a line of Shakespeare's simply as five iambic feet, is to ignore the music of it. For English syllables are not always and everywhere of the same length and value; the length or strength of a syllable depends upon its context, and upon the meaning of the phrase, which imposes particular stresses and intonations. The English verse line is better conceived on the analogy of a musical phrase, composed of bars of equal value though not of an equal number of notes. There are not many actors capable of reciting Shakespeare so as to bring out all the musical value; the tendency of most is either to deliver the line as a monotonous series of thumps, or, if they feel that this is too remote from speech, to deliver it as if it was prose. It is putting this point in an exaggerated way to say that since the middle of the seventeenth century a great deal of the musical possibilities of English verse has been ignored in obedience to supposed rules of versification. The speech quality – the foundation of the dramatic quality – of our blank verse was very gravely damaged by Milton, who, being a very great poet as well as a remarkable linguist and classical scholar, made it the vehicle for a different kind of music than that native to English speech. I believe that the blank verse line is a kind of norm for English verse, that it is the right length for the English voice; but in order to recover it, we have to depart from it, if we are to restore in the speech of our own time anything of the flexibility and range that it had in the time of Shakespeare. Hence, while modern English poetry has been influenced to some extent by Walt Whitman, and by experiments on the borders of prose and verse in other languages, I regard it rather as tending to recover the music and speech values of three hundred and more years ago, than as tending to a new kind of prosody. Obviously, many people would rather be supplied with rules, than be forced to depend upon their own ear and taste for distinguishing between good poetry and bad; and such people will resent what they term the licence taken by modern poets. But there has been a significant tendency to assimilate older styles, which our nearer ancestors thought crude and unpolished: with some, like myself, to learn from the Elizabethan dramatists and from John Donne; with others, to go to still more remote periods, to Skelton and the Scot Dunbar, or to Anglo-Saxon poetry.[17] I will take a few specimens of the work of younger poets to illustrate what I have just said about versification. To show that deliberate irregularities in regular forms are as characteristic as *vers libres*, [I offer] the following ("Villanelle") of William Empson, a poet who likes to work in set and complicated patterns:

Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.
It is not the effort nor the failure tires.
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

It is not your system or clear sight that mills
Down small to the consequence a life requires;
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.

They bled an old dog dry yet the exchange rills
Of young dog blood gave but a month's desires.
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

It is the Chinese tombs and the slag hills
Usurp the soil, and not the soil retires.
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.

Not to have fire is to be a skin that shrills.
The complete fire is death. From partial fires
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.

It is the poems you have lost, the ills
From missing dates, at which the heart expires.
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.[18]

Another good illustration is a chorus from a play by W. H. Auden, one of the most versatile and accomplished of the younger men:

Though he believe it, no man is strong.
He thinks to be called the fortunate,
To bring home a wife, to live long.

But he is defeated; let the son
Sell the farm lest the mountain fall;
His mother and her mother won.

His fields are used up where the moles visit,
The contours worn flat; if there show
Passage for water, he will miss it:

Give up his breath, his woman, his team;
No life to touch, though later there be
Big fruit, eagles above the stream.[19]

It is impossible in the time to choose enough examples to make clear the extent of the differences as well as the common characteristics of the younger poets. To be quite fair, I should have to quote several other authors, because at this stage it is impossible to be quite sure which young poets have the capacity for indefinite development and maturity, and which will fall by the wayside. I should mention, as poets essentially different from each other as well as from those just quoted, Louis MacNeice, an Irishman, George Barker, a Londoner, and Dylan Thomas, whose temperament is essentially and characteristically Welsh.[20] But I cannot close without saying something about the tendency, which seems native to the English language, towards the form of poetic drama. In our time, we owe a great deal to William Butler Yeats in this field also, for keeping alive the ideals of dramatic poetry during an age when the theatre seemed to have become triumphantly prosaic; and I wish that I had the time to say more about the work of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, and the different problems involved in the recreation of poetic drama in England.[21] The general problem for us has been this: first to develop a kind of versification sufficiently different from Shakespearean verse to serve as a dramatic medium for our own time. What is required is a verse in which the most matter-of-fact statements can be made without appearing prosaic, and which can rise to poetic intensity without being false and high-flown: a verse, in fact, which will not sound incongruous in the mouths of contemporary characters in contemporary situations. This is a hard task in itself; but the poet must also, of course, learn by years of toil, all the technique of the ordinary theatre. That is perhaps more than can be accomplished in one generation; but I think enough has been done to show that success is possible. Besides my own experiments, of which I shall not speak, there have been plays by younger men. I do not feel that the plays of Messrs. Auden and Isherwood have been on the main line of development: they have tended to be rather prose plays interspersed with verse, than real dramatic poetry.[22] The most promising play so far, is in my opinion the *Trial of a Judge* by Stephen Spender, a play which has faced all the difficulties by being all in verse. I will quote a few lines merely to indicate the kind of versification:

I speak from the centre of a stage
Not of a tragedy, but a farce

Where I am the spiritual unsmiling clown
Defeated by the brutal swearing giant
Whose law is power, his order
Nature's intolerant chaos.[23]

The play has serious technical defects, and I do not think that the author has a perfect control of his medium, but the possibilities of development are evident.

The most serious charge brought against recent poetry by conservative critics is that it is very obscure. As a matter of fact, there is a great deal, even by writers supposed to be difficult, which is extremely simple. But the charge is not without foundation.[24] The causes for this obscurity are themselves obscure; but I think that I may with confidence say this: that the tendency in a modern poet's development is from the obscure to the lucid. As he matures, as he acquires control over his medium, and over his own thoughts and feelings, the good poet tends towards a greater and greater simplicity and directness. And I believe that a hundred years hence, the best of the poetry of to-day will seem as wholly intelligible as the best of the poetry of a hundred years ago seems to us now.

NOTES

1. TSE alludes to his first essay on Milton, "A Note on the Verse of John Milton" (1936; later "Milton I" in *OPP*), in which he states that "What seems to me necessary is to assert at the same time his greatness . . . and the serious charges to be made against him, in respect of the deterioration – the peculiar kind of deterioration – to which he subjected the language" (5.371).

2. TSE wrote in "Blake" (1920): "[Blake's] philosophy, like his visions, like his insight, like his technique, was his own. And accordingly he was inclined to attach more importance to it than an artist should; this is what makes him eccentric, and makes him inclined to formlessness" (2.189).

3. From Horace, *Odes*, Book 4, 1: *Trans*: "I am not as I was in the reign of the kind Cynara"; the poem was first published in 1891.

4. The last of four sestets. When a *TLS* reviewer of Dowson's *Poems* suggested in 1935 that TSE's repetition of the phrase "Falls the Shadow" in part 5 of "The Hollow Men" was indebted to the third line of this stanza, TSE replied on 10 Jan that he believed the assumption "to be correct, because the lines . . . have always run in my head, and because I regard Dowson as a poet whose technical innovations have been underestimated" (5.158).

5. *The Testament of Beauty: A Poem in Four Books* (1929). In his obituary for Bridges in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1930, in which he pays tribute to Bridges's role as Poet Laureate, TSE writes, "even those poets . . . who cannot join the chorus of praise over *The Testament of Beauty*, have reason to bless his memory" (4.141-42).

6. TSE first praised and criticized Brooke's poems with other Georgian poets in "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry, I" (1917) (1.575). He would later honor de la Mare with a poem, "To Walter de la Mare," in *Tribute to Walter de la Mare on His Seventy-fifth Birthday* (London: Faber, 1948), 106-07 (*CPP* 204-05; *Poems1* 217-18).

7. Kipling's stories and poems in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) intimate the essential continuity of English history. The book's three "Parnesius" stories center on a Roman legion who defend Hadrian's Wall.

8. Hulme's "The Embankment" (1909), subtitled "(The fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a cold, bitter night)." TSE first quoted the poem, without identifying the author, in "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1917), praising it for its "beauty" and its mastery of the "constant evasion and recognition of regularity" (1.513). He also taught Hulme's poem in his 1916 Extension lectures. Eight of Hulme's poems survive in *The Collected Writings of T. E. Hulme* (1994).

9. TSE discussed the war poets in his 1933 Harvard course, English 26: "Wilfred Owen really belongs to the 90s in feeling – to the last of Lionel Johnson, i.e. 'Greater Love.' Compare the satiric spirit in Auden with that in Siegfried Sassoon (not really a poet). . . . Owen's great contribution the imperfect rhyme. Quote 'Strange Meeting.' Document of a forgotten generation. Owen the only real 'War Poet' (define). Others were real poets killed in the war" (4.783). In "A Brief Treatise on the Criticism of Poetry" (1920), TSE wrote, "Let the public . . . ask itself why it has never heard of the poems of T. E. Hulme or Isaac Rosenberg" (2.202), and he later called Rosenberg "the most remarkable of the poets killed in that war" (*TCC* 59).

10. TSE first discussed the plays of Yeats, A.E., Lady Gregory, and Synge in his 1917 syllabus on modern literature (1.591-92) and again in his lecture on "The Irish Theatre" in English 26 (4.776-77).

11. "Who Goes with Fergus?" was originally a song in the second scene of Yeats's play *The Countess Cathleen* (1892); it was first included separately and under this title in the 1912 edition of *Poems*, in the section titled *The Rose*. TSE discussed the poem and William Empson's analysis of it in English 26 (4.775).

12. "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," stanzas 5, 6, and 8. Gregory (1881-1918), a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps, was killed in action in Italy on 23 Jan. The elegy was completed in June 1918 and appeared in Yeats's *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919). TSE described Yeats in English 26 as "At his best when most human, as in 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory'" (4.776).

13. In his tribute to Yeats on his seventieth birthday in the *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1935, TSE emphasized Yeats's development as a component of his greatness: "Mr. Yeats has been and is the greatest poet of his time. . . . I can think of no poet, not even among the very greatest, who has shown a longer period of development than Yeats. . . . Development to this extent is not merely genius, it is character; and it sets a standard which his juniors should seek to emulate, without hoping to equal" (5.260).

14. TSE owned the second edition of *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Robert Bridges (London: Oxford UP, 1930); it contains his bookplate and pencil marginalia.

15. TSE compared the two poets "to Hopkins's advantage" in his Page-Barbour lectures (1933): "They are both English nature poets, they have similar technical tricks, and Hopkins is much the more agile. And where Meredith . . . has only a rather cheap and shallow 'philosophy of life' to offer, Hopkins has the dignity of the Church behind him, and is consequently in closer contact with reality" (5.37).

16. The first section of the sonnet. TSE devoted two lectures to Hopkins in English 26 and discussed the poem: "Hopkins on the Falcon. Versification essentially a disturbance of the conventional language" (4.782).

17. In a lecture given in America in 1933, "The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry," TSE reportedly stated that "Young poets are now going back to earlier English and Scottish poetry – that of Skelton and Dunbar for example" (4.842), and in English 26 he gave Auden as an example: "Auden as a satirist, hence his affinity with Skelton and Dunbar" (4.783).

18. Composed in Feb 1937, the poem was published under the title "Villanelle" by TSE in the *Criterion* of July 1937 (618); it first appeared under its permanent title, "Missing Dates," in Empson's *The Gathering Storm* (Faber, 1940).

19. From the final scene of Auden's first dramatic work, *Paid on Both Sides: A Charade*, written in 1928, first published in the *Criterion* of Jan 1930 (268-90) and included in *Poems* (Faber, 1930). TSE first discussed the work as an example of Auden's "intenser poetry" in English 26 (4.783).

20. TSE had published in the *Criterion* several poems each by MacNeice, Barker (1913-91), and Thomas (1914-53) in the 1930s; he had also placed MacNeice and Barker on the Faber list, publishing MacNeice's *Poems* (1935), his Group Theatre play *Out of the Picture* (1937), and *The Earth Compels* (1938), together with Barker's *Poems* (1935) and *Calamiterro* (1937).

21. On 7 May, while writing this lecture, TSE received an invitation from Sean O'Faolain to give the first Yeats Memorial Lecture at the Abbey Theatre in June but had to decline in light of the Italian trip. On 14 May, while waiting for a decision about the threatened cancelation, he told Hayward that "this damned enterprise has taken up quite enough of my time, and I shall be relieved when it is over and I can attend to more serious matters. Besides, I have just had an invitation to deliver the first annual address in Dublin in memory of Yeats and I had much rather have done that, but it conflicts." When the Italian cancelation came the next day, he accepted O'Faolain's invitation and delivered the address at the Abbey on 30 June (6.78).

22. TSE refers to the Auden-Isherwood plays produced at London's Group Theatre, of which he was a member: *The Dog beneath the Skin* (1936); *The Ascent of F6* (1937); and *On the Frontier* (1938). TSE's *Sweeney Agonistes* had been produced there in 1934.

23. Spender began work on *Trial of a Judge* in 1933 for production by the Group Theatre the following year, but as he did not complete the play until 1936, the production was delayed until 18 Mar 1938. A five-act tragedy published by Faber in 1938, *Trial of a Judge* was based on the murder of a Polish Jew by Nazis in Silesia in 1932 and portrays the pressures on a liberal-minded judge striving to maintain justice between contending political factions. TSE quotes from the judge's speech to the audience in Act IV after he is released from chains (85). He wrote to Spender on 22 Mar that he was "very much impressed and moved" by the play. "My chief criticism is that I thought there was too much poetry. It seems to me that for the stage one needs a good deal of straightforward simple verse. So much poetry is deadening to one's sensibility, and also doesn't leave any reserve for hammering with particular passages and phrases."

24. TSE discusses the nature of obscurity in modern poetry in "The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry" (4.840).

[Types of English Religious Verse]

This is the second unpublished lecture TSE prepared for delivery at the British Institutes in six Italian cities, together with "The Last Twenty-Five Years of English Poetry" (6.29). He wrote to John Hayward on 5 Apr 1940, after sending him a draft of the latter: "Tomorrow I proceed to tackle the other lecture, the Geo. Herbert etc. stuff: that ought to be much easier. After I have got them both done I shall start to rewrite." The cities included Rome, Palermo, Florence, and Milan during the fortnight following his scheduled departure on 20 May, but the trip was cancelled on 15 May by the British Council on advice from the Foreign Office, which expressed concerns about TSE's security. On 10 June, the date of his scheduled return, Italy declared war on Britain and France.[1]

The untitled typescript of twenty-one pages, misdated 1939, is archivally titled (King's).

In considering a subject like this, in the space of one lecture, I have found it necessary to impose two arbitrary limitations. The first concerns the history that can be covered. I shall only attempt to deal at all with the last three hundred and fifty years. In earlier periods we find a number of religious lyrics and popular carols, some of very considerable beauty. And our first great poet, Chaucer, has a definitely religious and Catholic background, as the last stanza of his long poem "Troilus and Criseyde" attests.[2] But in the latter part of the sixteenth century a new kind of religious self-consciousness appears in English literature: and it is to this modern religious consciousness in poetry that I shall confine my attention. Second, I shall limit myself to considering the more lyrical types of poetry. To discuss the narrative and the argumentative types of poetry, including the work of Milton, and *The Hind and the Panther* of Dryden, would be impossible in the time.[3] And finally, I shall confine myself to religious poetry arising out of specifically Christian belief, ignoring the religious feeling which, as in the Romantic period, expresses itself in other categories of cosmogony.

To begin then with the poetry of the age of Queen Elizabeth, what strikes us first is that its main current is humanistic and neo-classical, and shows very little that is definitely Christian in thought and feeling. What there is in the poetry of Edmund Spenser is superficial; and we could hardly tell, from the plays of the great Elizabethan dramatists, whether the authors were Christians or not. We know that Ben Jonson was a sincere Christian, from anecdotes of his life: we do not know it from his plays. We know, on the other hand, that Christopher Marlowe was probably a free-thinker; and that although religious conformity was enforced, there was a libertine spirit, centred in a group of which Sir Walter Ralegh was an important member, among some of the intellectuals of the Queen's court. Her own religious beliefs tended to conform to her politics. Yet after her long reign was ended, and just as the dramatic impulse was beginning to fail, we find that for a time the most important poets are all writers of religious inspiration; and throughout the seventeenth century the greatest poets – I have mentioned Milton and Dryden – chose religious themes. In the reign of James I, John Donne, who had been the greatest writer of love lyrics, took religious orders and became Dean of St. Paul's; and in this second period of his life his poetry is religious. And the greatest of the disciples and followers of Donne – George Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw and Traherne – were all men who either confined themselves to, or excelled in, the writing of religious verse.

I should have to be not only a considerable scholar in the history of literature, but in the whole social history of that age, even to give plausible guesses at the cause of this surprising change. What happened in England was, of course, only a local phase of what was happening throughout Europe. Such problems are ultimately insoluble: why should a half dozen poets with a genius for the theatre appear in one generation, and another half dozen whose genius expressed itself in the religious lyric, a generation later? For what the literary historian has to say, I can refer you to Grierson's *Cross-Currents in the XVII Century* and to Basil Willey's *Seventeenth Century Background*.[4] But it must be remarked that the reign of Queen Elizabeth, although not highly distinguished by religious verse, was a time of great theological activity, and a time when even the general public displayed a taste, never since that time evinced by our public, for listening with rapt attention to very long and sometimes very difficult sermons. The greatest theologians, such as Hooker and Andrewes, produced their greatest work during the reign of Queen Elizabeth's successor James, himself a notable theologian: but the work had been going on. Most of the theological writing of the time – and the quantity, in England as elsewhere, was enormous – was apologetic and controversial. It is my belief that the religious poetry of the seventeenth century, both Roman and Anglican, is deeply affected by a new religious self-consciousness generated by the religious warfare both physical and intellectual. It is perhaps significant that the first of the sequence of religious poets was Robert Southwell, the Jesuit priest martyred in 1595.

By comparison with that of his successors, the verse of Southwell is crude and unsophisticated. It is often early Tudor, rather than Elizabethan, in style; for the advances that poetry had made were in a different field. His best-known poem, "The Burning Babe," is not necessarily his best; but it illustrates his ruggedness of versification, and his anticipation of the figurative style which was to be that of the seventeenth century. It is a vision of the Christ Child on Christmas Eve: the Child speaks.

My faultless breast the furnace is; the fuel, wounding thorns;
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke; the ashes, shame and scorns;
The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals,
The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defilèd souls.[5]

The verse is really the old "fourteener," the fourteen-syllable line used by the translators of Seneca. But Southwell, in spite of a certain uncouthness, is a good poet who influenced his successors more than is generally recognised.

There is a suggestion worth keeping in mind, made by Professor R. W. Chambers, a great scholar who has also the merit of writing well and of sometimes propounding original theories. He calls attention to the popularity, attested by repeated reprinting throughout the sixteenth century, of the body of religious prose composed during the great period of English mysticism, the fourteenth century.[6] Such works as *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the writings of Richard Rolle and the Lady Juliana of Norwich, were constantly published up to the end of the century, and were probably in the libraries of such learned and inquisitive men as were John Donne and George Herbert.[7] Richard Crashaw was certainly very much affected by the works of St. Theresa of Avila, which were accessible in England, even had Crashaw not known Spanish. But the mysticism of each country has its own character; and certainly the peculiar quality of the English mystics has an affinity with the poetry of George Herbert. But, so paradoxical are these currents, it was at the very time when Herbert and his contemporaries were producing their poetry that the books of the old mystics seem to have been dropping out of circulation. Dr. Chambers believes that the beginning of the seventeenth century brought a revival of religious feeling comparable to that of the fourteenth century; but that the age being unfavourable to the contemplative life, and to the composition of mystical treatises, this feeling found its only outlet in lyrical poetry.

Whether I am right or not, about the influence of the violent religious controversy of that time, it is certain that there have been, in English religious verse since then, these two strains of Roman and Anglican feeling and thought. John Milton, of course, belonged to neither communion; but were I to treat him in his place, it would be, not as the representative of any dissenting sect, but as an independent and original anomaly. The dissenting sects have made no important contribution to English religious poetry; they need only be kept in mind as perhaps giving the other religious poets an additional awareness of something that they were not.

There are four poets who deserve most attention, at the beginning of the seventeenth century: Donne, Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan. Crashaw, the only Roman Catholic among them, was also the only one who was of definitely English antecedence: Herbert and Vaughan certainly, and Donne probably, were of Welsh race. John Donne, though he became the Anglican Dean of St. Paul's, probably had been under Roman influence in his early youth: certainly no one at his time was more conversant with current European theology. Herbert is the pure Anglican type. Crashaw was a Roman convert. Vaughan, a Welsh country gentleman, is the least theological, and represents a more mystical strain, but at the same time a less disciplined orthodoxy. These are all, in some respects, rather difficult poets; but the obscurities in their work are not obscurities peculiar to the English language but to the period: all the European verse with which they can be compared showed the same tendency to elaboration and to the "conceit." I do not suppose that the poetry of Gongora is any less difficult for a modern Spaniard than that of Donne for a modern Englishman: perhaps – for to me he is impenetrable – Gongora is the most difficult of all. What are the general peculiarities of this school of poetry you can learn as well as I; and indeed the best book on the styles of Donne and Crashaw is that of Mario Praz: *Secentismo e Marinismo in Inghilterra*: and Signor Praz is probably more familiar with the less-known verse of the period, including that in Latin and Dutch, than anyone living.[8] There has been no period since when so many poets writing in different languages had so much in common.

The chief value, however, of the study of the common style of an epoch, from the point of view of anyone wishing to be able to enjoy the poetry, is that it helps us to appreciate more fully what is personal to each poet. Each of the four men I have mentioned had a strong individuality. Donne, who only found his religious vocation in middle life – and some believe that it was primarily a means of livelihood rather than a vocation – is primarily a poet. You will agree that the distinction between a man who is primarily a poet, and makes use of religious subjects, and a man who is primarily a devout, and uses poetry to express his devotion, is a very fine one: and we can never be sure on which side of this imaginary line any particular religious poetry belongs. Donne certainly had, from his beginning, that always present sense of Death and Mortality which none of his contemporaries, however irreligious, was without; a sense of Death no doubt sharpened by the reminder of frequent recurrences of plague; and in his religious phase he adds an awareness of damnation and of penitence, supported by his great theological learning. Some of the finest of his religious poems are sonnets:

> Batter my heart, three person'd God; for you
> As yet but knock, breathe, shine and seek to mend;
> That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
> Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new.
> I, like an usurpt town, to another due,
> Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
> Reason your viceroy in me, me should defend,
> But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
> Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved faine,
> But am betroth'd unto your enemy:
> Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again;
> Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
> Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
> Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.[9]

You would not, however, grasp the full influence of Donne upon his younger contemporaries, only from reading his religious verse. The love poems which he wrote in youth were widely known, and established his style. In these early poems all the innovations of his idiom are displayed: a style at once natural and highly sophisticated, catching the tone and rhythm of ordinary speech and expressing also the most refined intellectual subtleties. In his later days, he was known chiefly as a great preacher. It is his early determined idiom, his choice of language, his syntax, his use of figures of speech, and his deliberate broken rhythms, that we find echoed by his successors. The influence of one poet upon another is normally less through what he has to say, than by the way in which he says it; and the impulse to express religious devotion in verse was not due to the example of one man.

The more typically Anglican and Roman poets, Herbert and Crashaw respectively, were of the younger generation influenced by Donne. The two men, equally great as artists, were of very different temperament. George Herbert, in spite of an apparent simplicity of style, was more the theologian, nourished on scholastic as well as contemporary theology. His mood, suited to his life as incumbent of two very small parishes in Wiltshire, was more serene, as his life was more quiet: he expresses neither the more sombre struggles of Donne between the spirit and the flesh, nor the more ardent spiritual passion of Crashaw. Herbert, the Anglican, is content to meditate upon the central mysteries of the Incarnation and the Eucharist. Crashaw, by both temperament and education, is more the European of his time: one of his themes is that veneration of St. Mary Magdalene then prevalent in Europe, a theme perhaps more associated with the name of Marino than with any other. Crashaw was widely read in contemporary literature, was certainly influenced by Marino and perhaps by Gongora; but I would question whether even in the work of these two poets you will find a finer or more typical an expression of the devotion of that time. Herbert has less passionate intensity. But when Crashaw seems at times to be merely transferring the terms and feelings of human passion to divine objects, Herbert seems the more purely religious. And as it would be futile to attempt to estimate their comparative greatness, I can only say that while certain of Crashaw's poems take flights beyond the range of Herbert, Herbert produced a larger body of first-rate poems. The best way to show the difference between them is to read a poem by each.

"Redemption," a sonnet by Herbert:

Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
Not thriving, I resolvèd to be bold,
And make a suit unto Him, to afford
A new small-rented lease, and cancel th' old.

In heaven at His manour I Him sought:
They told me there, that He was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly bought
Long since on Earth, to take possession.

I straight returned, and knowing His great birth,
Sought Him accordingly in great resorts –

In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts:
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth

Of thieves and murderers; there I Him espied,
Who straight, "Your suit is granted," said, and died.[10]

That gives a very fair impression of the homeliness of imagery, and simplicity of phrase, associated with Herbert. It is difficult to find a typical poem of Crashaw which is not too long to read now, so I shall read the closing lines of "The Flaming Heart Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Theresa":

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee His;
By all the heav'ns thou hast in Him
(Fair sister of the seraphim!)
By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die.[11]

Yet, though the two men were so different, it is pleasant to recall that Crashaw sent a copy of Herbert's poems to a lady, with a complimentary poem, in which he wrote

Know you, fair, on what you look?
Divinest love lies in this book . . .
  And though Herbert's name do owe
  These devotions; fairest, know
  That while I lay them on the shrine
  Of your white hand, they are mine.[12]

There are many single poems by minor poets of this period that deserve a place in religious anthologies: such poets as Francis Quarles and Andrew Marvell count among them. The religious poet most worthy of single mention, after Herbert and Crashaw, is Henry Vaughan, a Welsh country gentleman. He is a poet of many fine lines, of many lines equal to the best of Donne or Herbert or Crashaw, but of hardly any wholly perfect poems. The significance of Vaughan lies in a more personal mysticism, a mysticism apparently the reminiscence of some ecstatic experience in childhood; and which, as he was a man of less firm theological grasp than those others, somewhat portends the more explicit and wholly undogmatic nature-mysticism of Wordsworth long after. The most complete expression of this temperament is in "The Retreat":

Happy those early days, when I
Shin'd in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back – at that short space –
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud, or flow'r,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A sev'ral sin to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness . . .[13]

As I said at the beginning, I am not attempting to cover any verse except that expressive of Christian piety. The religious inspiration in the poetry of the eighteenth century, or in that of the Romantic Movement, is therefore outside my scope. So also is the poetry of William Blake at the end of the eighteenth century – a great poet, and a religious poet if there ever was one;

but whose Christianity is so individual and eccentric that it is extremely difficult to define: he is indeed less orthodox than Milton. The beginnings of a revival of Christian verse in the nineteenth century were extremely modest. The Oxford Movement, started by theologians at that university – of whom the most illustrious is of course Cardinal Newman – is usually dated from 1833. It did not include any considerable poet; but an important member was John Keble, who had a certain gift for verse, which he employed on the hymns and devotional poems included in *The Christian Year*.[14] It was not until a second generation that the Oxford Movement brought any great religious poetry. The first, and the typically Anglican, was Christina Rossetti, whose brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, has usually been better known, not only as painter but as poet too.

Now, I suggested before that the conflicts of a period of violent religious differences, and a period in which people took their religious differences very seriously indeed, gave a peculiar intensity to the religious verse of the early seventeenth century. The new tension which produced religious poetry in the nineteenth century was of a different kind. The true importance of the Oxford Movement is not in the Anglican-Roman struggle which occurred within it. The Oxford Movement was a revolution, not of one form of Christianity against another, but, fundamentally, of Christians combating the decay of Christendom, and the rise of irreligion open and professed. Hence the self-consciousness of the religious poet becomes, for the first time, that of the Christian in a non-Christian, or a less and less Christian world. Poets like Tennyson, Browning and Matthew Arnold still called themselves Christians, and maintained a certain amount of Christian observance. But they all compromised with the ideas of the age to which they belonged: its belief in science, in progress and enlightenment, its Christian morals without the Christian foundation. They had religiosity rather than religion. The next generation, that of the Pre-Raphaelites, produced poets more openly detached from Christianity – such as Swinburne, whose first volume won a *succès de scandale* for this reason.[15] It is interesting that the sister of one of the greatest of the Pre-Raphaelites should have been a great Christian poet.

Not only two-hundred years of religious history, but two-hundred years of literary history, make the religious poetry of the nineteenth century very different from that of the seventeenth. The earlier poetry, in comparison, is impressively impersonal: it is the work of men who were Christians in a Christian society. It is not only free from autobiography, but from the consciousness on the part of the author of being a Christian. The writer vanishes from his own mind, in the presence of what he contemplates. After the Romantic Movement, a poet, and especially a religious poet, is more conscious of himself. For the Christian poet, there was not only the consciousness of a certain isolation in the world; there is also the consciousness of the struggle by which his faith was won – the consciousness, in short, of the convert: though perhaps a convert as an adult back to the faith into which he was born. Add to this the fact that Christina Rossetti was a woman, and it is not surprising that her poetry should be a kind of reticent confession, an *aveu*.[16] The biography of the poet takes on a certain importance for understanding the poetry. In the work of Christina Rossetti, we recognise a wistfulness for the normal satisfactions of life which her lonely situation denied her; and the fact that she rejected one lover because he belonged to another communion, and a second, and more important lover, because his Christianity was at best frail, is useful to know.[17] What emerges triumphantly from the reserved autobiography of her poems is a surrender to the will of God, an inspired passivity, which is perfectly expressed in her best-known, and one of her finest poems:

Passing away, saith the World, passing away:
Chances, beauty and youth sapped day by day:
Thy life never continueth in one stay.
Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to grey
That hath won neither laurel nor bay?
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:
Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay
On my bosom for aye.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away:
With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and play;
Hearken what the past doth witness and say:
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day
Lo, the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay:
Watch thou and pray.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away:
Winter passeth after the long delay:
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.
Though I tarry, wait for Me, trust Me, watch and pray.
Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,
My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear Me say.
Then I answered: Yea.[18]

We must expect the religious verse of any time to share the virtues and also the limitations of the other verse of that time. The aestheticism which is represented in the later nineteenth century by the name of Walter Pater, and his disciple Oscar Wilde, finds expression in religion in a revived care for the liturgical and ritual beauties of Catholicism – a tendency which appears in Pater's novel of early Christian times, *Marius the Epicurean*.[19] "Domine, dilexi decorum domus tui."[20] To religious literature in England, at that time, there are parallels in France: the sentiment of Verlaine in *Sagesse*, and the exploitation of mediaevalism in Huysmans' *En Route* and *La Cathédrale*.[21] To these influences may be added an admiration for the prose style of Cardinal Newman. A good deal of this literary fervour is rather suspect; with some of the more genuine, the religious element participates in a struggle within the soul of the artist. One of the finest of the poets of the end of the century, Lionel Johnson, was a convert. His religious impulse, very different from the impersonal exaltation of a Herbert or a Crashaw, is one of almost desperate striving:

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust
To rid the world of penitence:
Malicious Angel, who still dost
My soul such subtile violence!

. . . .

I fight thee, in the Holy Name!
Yet, what thou dost, is what God saith:
Tempter! should I escape thy flame,
Thou wilt have helped my soul from Death:

The second Death, that never dies,
That cannot die, when time is dead:
Live Death, wherein the lost soul cries,
Eternally uncomforted.

. . . .

Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,
Dark Angel! triumph over me:
Lonely, unto the Lone I go;
Divine, to the Divinity.[22]

The kind of preoccupation, a by-product of the Romantic Movement, with the question of one's own salvation – characteristic of the period – is also expressed in the verse of Francis Thompson, a more fluent, but a less perfect poet than Johnson. One feels that Thompson, in his best-known poem, "The Hound of Heaven," is more concerned with himself than with God. And his fine poem on "The Dead Cardinal of Westminster," though written for the occasion of the death of Cardinal Manning, ends with an invocation to the prelate to intercede for him in Heaven.[23] He puts into the Cardinal's mouth at the end what he wishes said for him:

Can it be his alone,
To find, when all is known,
        That what
    He solely sought

Is lost, and thereto lost
All that its seeking cost?
        That he
    Must finally,

Through sacrificial tears,
And anchoretic years,
        Tryst
    With the sensualist?

So ask; and if they tell
The secret terrible,
        Good friend,
    I pray thee send

Some high gold embassage
To teach my unripe age.
        Tell!
    Lest my feet walk hell.

Quite apart, however, from these and other religious poets of the century, and I think the greatest, is the poet who died in 1889 but whose poetry has only become known during the last twenty years. Gerard Manley Hopkins belongs to an earlier literary generation than Thompson or Johnson. He was a Jesuit priest, aloof from the world and engaged in his religious duties. He had no wish for notoriety; he had scruples even about writing poetry, and but for the encouragement of his superiors might not have persisted in writing. He is a mid-Victorian, with affinities to Browning and more to George Meredith: not so gifted as they in some respects, yet perhaps a more permanent poet in that his poetry had behind it a universal philosophy instead of an ephemeral doctrine of the age. His technical innovations, in form and in vocabulary, are very considerable; superficially, they can make him seem a poet rather of the twentieth than of the nineteenth century; also, they make him rather a difficult writer. During the short time in which his poems have been known to the public, attention has been too much concentrated on his style and its supposed modernity, to the exclusion of his content: but, as I have suggested, I think that his real place is as the greatest religious poet of his own century. One peculiarity to which I should call attention is his passionate love of nature, and the minute and loving care with which, in his private diary as well as in his poems, he describes its appearances. In this love of nature he is extremely English, in the tradition from Wordsworth. But in Hopkins the nature-worship of the Romantics is taken up into something higher, and reaches its consummation by being re-integrated into an orthodox Christian view of life. To have accomplished this is a great achievement.[24] There remains, for the future, the fusion of the different Christian strains into one.

I cannot now discuss or illustrate his peculiarities of style and metric, or all his feeling for nature. I will read one poem which shows both his technical originality and his religious feeling. It is not an easy poem, either to read or follow. But all that a first reading of a poem by Hopkins can convey, is something of the music and the mood:

To what serves mortal beauty | – dangerous; does set danc-
ing blood – the O-seal-that-so | feature, flung prouder form
Than Purcell tune lets tread to? | See: it does this: keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are; | what good means – where a glance
Master more may than gaze, | gaze out of countenance.

Those lovely lads once, wet-fresh | windfalls of war's storm,
How then should Gregory, a father, | have gleanèd else from swarm-
ed Rome? But God to a nation | dealt that day's dear chance.
   To man, that needs would worship | block or barren stone,
Our law says: Love what are | love's worthiest, were all known;
World's loveliest – men's selves. Self | flashes off frame and face.
What do then? how meet beauty? | Merely meet it; own,
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift; | then leave, let that alone.
Yea, wish that though, wish all, | God's better beauty, grace.[25]

When one reads this poem slowly to oneself, the meaning is not really obscure. The difficulty lies in the peculiar construction: Hopkins can be called a difficult poet, but not, as is Mallarmé, an opaque poet. His style is very personal; it is not that of his period, or of any period. It is not a style to imitate; not strictly a classical style.

I will close with Hopkins, for it was not part of my purpose to discuss the religious poetry that is being written to-day. I wish, however, to say this about the probable direction of religious poetry in the immediate future. The tendency is towards something more impersonal than that of "the last romantics," and I think away from decorative or sensuous aestheticism. It will be much more interested in the dogma and the doctrine; in religious thought, rather than purely personal religious feeling. The precursor of this attitude was T. E. Hulme, killed in 1917; he was not a religious poet, but his critical ideas took this direction. In more recent times has come the increasing attention paid also by laymen and even by men outside of the Church, to scholastic philosophy; and among the younger English theologians, a revival deeply influenced by Thomism, and to some extent also by Karl Barth and Kierkegaard.[26] Hence it is to be expected that the religious poetry of our time will be concerned primarily with giving poetic form to theological thought, and will tend to have more kinship with that of the seventeenth century, than with that of the nineteenth.

NOTES

1. The text of TSE's lecture is preceded by the following syllabus-style outline as an aid in composition:

> The XVI century background. Tudor music and the lyric. The humanistic current, illustrated by Spenser, from whom our dramatic verse is derived. The religious current, from the

prose mystics of the XIV century. Reasons for the appearance of religious poetry at the end of XVI century and beginning of XVII century.

The poetry of Robert Southwell. Donne as the moulder of the Jacobean and Caroline style. Three types compared: Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan – Anglican theology, Counter-Reformation devotion, and Celtic mysticism. Simultaneous decline of poetic purity and religious intensity: corruption and suppression of the "conceited style" in the age of Reason.

In the eighteenth century the orthodox Christian poet (Samuel Johnson) is a solitary figure: the tendency is towards the kind of nature worship which culminated in Wordsworth.

The Oxford Movement (hymns of Keble) provided a new stimulus for both Anglican and Roman devotional verse, though its influence does not appear in the work of the major poets of the time. Christina Rossetti.

The aesthetic-religious movement after Pater. Francis Thompson and Lionel Johnson. Religious poetry on a larger scale with Gerard Hopkins, who in his way united two nineteenth century currents. Possibilities of the future.

2. TSE quoted the last stanza of the poem, book 5, lines 1863-70, as printed in his copy of Skeat's *The Student's Chaucer* (1894), to conclude his Clark Lectures ("Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne on-lyve / That regnest ay in three and two and oon") (2.754). In his subsequent review that year of R. K. Root's edition of *The Book of Troilus and Criseyde*, he remarked: "It may be said without exaggeration that *Troilus and Criseyde* is a document second in importance, in its kind, only to the *Vita Nuova*. It is a pendant to the latter, and the two are perfectly consistent" (2.809).

3. *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), Dryden's allegorical poem advocating Roman Catholicism.

4. Herbert Grierson's *Cross-Currents in 17th Century Literature: The World, The Flesh, The Spirit, Their Actions and Reactions* appeared in 1929. Basil Willey (1897-1978), professor of English Literature at Cambridge University, published *The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion* in 1934.

5. "The Burning Babe" (1595), lines 9-12; TSE modernizes the spelling here but quotes from the original text in his 1926 review, "The Author of 'The Burning Babe'" (2.798).

6. R. W. (Raymond Wilson) Chambers (1874-1942), Quain Professor of English at University College, London, discusses the history of English prose from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries in *The Continuity of English Prose* (1932).

7. In the midst of composing *Little Gidding*, TSE wrote to John Hayward on 2 Sept 1942 that "there is so much 17th century in the poem . . . that I wanted to check this and at the same time give greater historical depth to the poem by allusions to the other great period, i.e. the 14th century. Juliana [of Norwich] and *The Cloud of Unknowing* represent pretty well the two mystical extremes or, one might say, the male and female of this literature. I might have dragged in Walter Hilton and Richard Rolle, I daresay, but for one thing I don't know them so well and for another I think that would be overdoing it."

8. TSE reviewed Praz's book in Dec 1925 (2.596) and made it a primary text of reference in his Clark Lectures in 1926 (2.623).

9. Number XIV (untitled) of Donne's *Holy Sonnets*. The poem was written ca. 1609 and published 1633.

10. Published in *The Temple* (1633). TSE quotes from his copy of the World's Classics edition of *The Poems of George Herbert* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907) (35), partially modernizing the spelling and ignoring line indentations.

11. TSE consistently spells "Teresa" as "Theresa" in his prose references to the saint. He quotes these lines (93-108), the last sixteen of twenty-four new lines added after publication of the first version in 1648, in concluding his 1926 Clark Lecture, "Crashaw," stating that the poem "is the ultimate literary expression of the religious feeling of that strange period of sensual religious intensity" (2.716). He quotes the lines again in his second Turnbull lecture as an example of the "exactness" of Crashaw's "intellectual order" (4.736-37).

12. "On Mr. George Herbert's Book, Entitled, *The Temple of Sacred Poems*, Sent to a Gentlewoman," lines 1-2, 15-18, in *Steps to the Temple* (1648); *read*: "While I thus lay them on the shrine"

13. "The Retreat" (1650), lines 1-20. TSE quotes lines 1-14 in "Mystic and Politician as Poet" (1930), stating that while the passage recalls Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," "I think it is a reference to some particular experience or experiences at some early period. . . . [T]he eternal life dimly revealed through nature is still the eternal life of Christianity . . . and there is no trace [in Vaughan] of the pantheism to which Wordsworth is exposed" (4.96-97). TSE reflects on the nature of Vaughan's mysticism in "The Silurist" (1927) (3.190).

14. *The Christian Year* (1827), a volume of poems written to enhance prayer and meditation on Sundays and feast days throughout the liturgical year of the Church of England.

15. Swinburne, *Poems and Ballads* (1866).

16. *aveu* (French): avowal, confession

17. Rossetti, a devout Anglo-Catholic, declined a proposal from James Collinson in 1848 because of his conversion to Roman Catholicism. In 1866 she rejected Charles Bagot Cayley, a friend of long standing, "on grounds of religious faith," according to her brother William.

18. "Passing Away, Saith the World" (1862).

19. In "Arnold and Pater" (1930) TSE states that the novel "represents the point in English history at which the repudiation of revealed religion by men of culture and intellectual leadership coincides with a renewed interest in the visual arts. . . . *Marius* itself is incoherent . . . its content is a hodge-podge of the learning of the classical don . . . and a prolonged flirtation with the liturgy" (4.183).

20. Psalm 26:8, *trans* (in KJV): Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house; *read*: Domine dilexi decorem domus tuae.

21. Verlaine, *Sagesse* (1881); Huysmans, *En route* (1895). With respect to *La Cathédrale* (1898), TSE remarks in "Baudelaire in our Time" (1927) that Huysmans "might have been much more in sympathy with the real spirit of the thirteenth century if he had thought less about it, and bothered less about architectural lore and quotations from philosophers whom he may have read but certainly did not understand: he is much more 'mediaeval' (and much more human) when he describes the visit of Madame Chantelouve to Durtal [in *Là-bas*] than when he talks about his Cathedral" (3.73).

22. "The Dark Angel," stanzas 1, 11, 12, 14; the poem first appeared in *The Second Book of the Rhymers' Club* (1894).

23. Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven" and "the Dead Cardinal of Westminster" both appeared in his first volume, *Poems* (1893).

24. TSE spoke more skeptically of Hopkins in his Page-Barbour lectures (1933) (5.36-37) and in "Tradition and the Practice of Poetry" (1936): "I cannot rate Gerard Hopkins so highly as most of my English friends do; although I like what he has to say much better than many of them, I still am put off by the way he says it. It strikes me as artificial, even affected and strained" (5.307).

25. "To what serves Mortal Beauty?" (1885); published in *Poems* (1918).

26. Karl Barth (1886-1968), Swiss Protestant theologian, professor of theology at the University of Basel and influential author of the four-volume *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (*Church Dogmatics*) (1932-67), unfinished at his death. TSE had a translation of the sixth edition of Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans* (1933) reviewed in the *Criterion* of Jan 1934 (342-44) and of his *Credo* (1936) in Jan 1937 (366-69). Barth was himself influenced by the Danish Christian philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1815-55), a founder of Christian existentialism. Translations of his *Purify Your Hearts* (1847) and Walter Lowrie's biography *Kierkegaard* were reviewed in the *Criterion* of Oct 1938 (107-11).

The Speed of Progress[1]

The New English Weekly, 17 (23 May 1940) 58

> In a message from Rhyl which appeared in *The Times* yesterday, it was stated that as a result of the Army Council's decision to proceed with the scheme for taking over 40,000 acres of agricultural land in Breconshire for use as an artillery range, 280 farmers would have to vacate their farms in October. In fact, the War Office has intimated that it must take possession of the range on June 1, but it has decided that there would be no objection to farmers remaining in occupation and leaving their stock on the land until June 30. Firing must begin on July 1, and extension therefore cannot be allowed beyond that date.
>
> (*The Times*)[2]

"The Times," in a message from Rhyl,
Remarked to the farmers: "Until
  October thirty-first
  Be prepared for the worst –
Which will come by June first,
                    so it will."

NOTES

[1] Unsigned but, according to HWE in the Houghton notebook, acknowledged.

[2] TSE's headnote quotes the entirety of "Land for Military Use," a report in the *Times* of 9 May 1940 (8). This story updates "Agricultural Land for Military Use," printed the previous day, which emphasized the regrettable consequences of the military takeover: "It is considered that the seizure of the land will destroy the amenities of one of the most promising national park sites in Wales, and will endanger the whole stability of the rural life in Wales." The Army Council, however, described itself as having "no alternative but to proceed with the scheme" (4).

The English Tradition: Some Thoughts as a Preface to Study

Christendom, 10 (June 1940) 101-08

The method of approach of *The English Situation* (the Syllabus of the Church Union Summer School of Sociology for 1940) is historical.[1] In the first section there is a sub-section entitled "Social Basis of Religious Groupings." It is my purpose in the present paper to develop certain thoughts suggested by this sub-section.[2] What I venture to put forward is concerned rather with the present, and the possible future; but I offer it as to some extent a preface to the historical study. For I believe that a complete historical method must proceed to interpret the past by the present, as well as the present by the past. Our understanding of our own time will direct, whether we will it or not, our interpretation of the past. This contention finds evidence, I think, in the work of the Liberal school of historians in the nineteenth century and in our own time, for whom past history was explained in almost teleological terms, as leading up to the freedom, justice and enlightenment by which they felt their own civilization to be distinguished. The better we understand the times in which we live, the better we shall be able to understand the past; and only by this movement of thought to and fro between the present and the past can we hope to approximate to the detachment necessary for understanding. A phenomenon is understood as much by its consequences, as by its causes.

The origin and development of sects in England is, so far as I know, a subject still awaiting careful sociological analysis. A superficial acquaintance with the subject would lead us, at least, to believe that a sect has been a complex social-religious unit, starting from a particular stratum of society and affirming that stratum as it develops. We are too much inclined to see the origin of a sect only in the religious enthusiasm of a leader, and too little inclined to notice the importance of the social motive and the economic interest. The strictly *theological* element – that which has an intellectual character such that it is capable of being submitted to argument – is perhaps no more than a minor part; and in consequence no purely theological argument is practically adequate as persuasion, with a view to the reintegration of sectarians into the Church, unless the person under persuasion is also brought to such a point of mental clarification as to dissociate the various elements which went to his social formation. We must remember that the conversion of a dissenter may involve a good deal besides intellectual conviction, and the removal of a good deal that obstructs such conviction: it may involve the conscious dissociation of the individual from a group which has been formed for some generations past. This is confirmed – though the complication only adds further confusion – by the fact that individuals whom a change of circumstances has allied to a new social group have often found it easy to change their religious communion accordingly. While such a change may usually be due to other than religious causes, we must not ignore the possibility that in many cases the "conversion" may be attributed to the removal of impediments by the adherence to, rather than by the ambition to join, another social group.

The significance of these remarks lies in the inference that, just as we must consider social-economic causes in the formation of religious groups, so we must recognize the importance of future social and economic changes in society in their possible effect upon these groups. The changes brought about by war – which, up to the present, appear to be merely an acceleration of the change proceeding during a generation past – might of course elevate one or more sects to a position of greater importance in the nation: but in view of the general decline of Christianity this does not appear probable. The tendency might rather be to iron out so much of the present social-economic grouping of society as to bring all Christians together into one group, either by reducing them all to one social situation, or by precipitating a crisis in which their religious affinity would become more important to them than the social differences. There is a danger, of course, in their coming together on a basis of Christian feeling – that is, of what was left of their inheritance of Christianity – rather than on a basis of doctrine. We must keep alert to the possible effects of social changes upon religious groups; but whether the changes be favourable or unfavourable to our general task, the recognition of their importance should make us see all the more clearly the vast importance of adhering to, and developing, our dogmatic theology. The results of the neglect of theology can be seen in the social doctrines of economists and sociologists who profess to be Christians, as well as of those who have abandoned it: the practical recommendations of such a writer as Lord Stamp, as well as of those who are explicitly agnostic, seem to me to be vitiated by the lack of fundamental theological principles.[3] There are arguments which I have no need to advance to readers of this paper on behalf of Catholic theology, but there is one result of the neglect of it which has not been often remarked: that it presents what proves in the end to be the *only* hope for man of attaining a really "scientific" attitude in the social sciences; for it is through the science of theology only that we can hope to bring to our own consciousness, and so dispose of, the unconscious assumptions, bias and prejudice which impair social thinking. Without an absolute basis – which can only be found in right thinking about God and Man – we are in no position to deal with the contingent.

With regard to the different shades of opinion and practice *within* the Church, there are parallels to the development of sectarianism which must not be taken without qualification. From one point of view, the creation of independent sects is merely the pushing further a tendency to group-formation which is found within the Church. But the more recent developments of Modernism and Anglo-Catholicism came at a time at which the tendency to form religious-social groups was weakening. The former is purely intellectual (so far as it has not been only negative and dissolvent). The latter has always obtained the adherence of individuals from various social groups, and so far as they came from the more dominant classes, these tended to be rebels, both in theology and in social gospel, from the groups to which they belonged. Anglo-Catholics, still more than Roman Catholics, among the prosperous classes, have usually been individuals or families engaged in a nexus of relationships with a society holding other views. In this peculiarity, I think, lies a great social potency of Anglican Catholicism in a changing and dissolving society; this (as against its sporadic tendency to a kind of parochialism) renders it the more adapted to win the community of the future.

That the old association of Anglicanism and Non-conformity with the Conservative and Liberal Parties respectively should have disappeared is a matter of gratification – not only for the obvious reason that the Conservative Party at times had more power over the Church than the Church over the Party.[4] We must recognize that the tendency towards what I have called the religious-social group is natural – and therefore to some degree right: but being natural, gives rise to most serious religious dangers. As I have attempted (not very successfully, I fear) to suggest elsewhere, mankind craves a certain unity between its religious and its social life;[5] but this unity can only be found wholly in a past which is pre-Christian, in societies of a relatively low level, in an ideal future – or (in theory) in the "Party" in Germany. Yet the tendency of people to combine in groups with the same religious views, as well as the same level of culture and even the same set of occupations (as appeared in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Birmingham) is natural and therefore right – if it does not go too far.[6] The danger to religion when particular religious views become associated with particular political views has often been remarked. But the harm is only more conspicuous in the political sphere; it can be equally great in more private relations, by giving religious sanction to beliefs and practices of purely social origin. In short, when a religious-social complex becomes too solid, whether on a large or small scale, it makes the individual *less conscious* and therefore retrograde.

We may at this point make the mistake of assuming that the destruction of religious-social groupings which is taking place in our time is altogether a good thing. Nothing, unfortunately, is so simple as that; and only a little reflection will show us that this destruction in itself is, in the course of nature, more baleful than propitious. A Tory party consisting of a solid battalion of hearty Erastian Anglicans animated by superstitious or irrelevant prejudice against Papists and Dissenters, is not necessarily a more ignoble body than a Conservative Party consisting of a miscellaneous crew of people of mixed origins, held together only by financial interests and completely indifferent to church or chapel.[7] A Liberal Party with a nucleus of stout self-made believers in chapel and factory, some of whom had read *The Pilgrim's Progress* in their boyhood, was a less pathetic spectacle than the Labour Party of to-day.[8] Those people who are so little conscious as to confound their religion and their politics, do not necessarily become more conscious, more developed, more civilized, by giving up their religion. And those people whose immersion in a small and parochial group renders them backward and ignorant, do not necessarily become more progressive and enlightened by having their group smashed up, by becoming atoms in a great mechanical vortex. As at so many points of history, we should say: something is passing which was not very good, and therefore we have an opportunity to constitute something better. But what is passing is passing from what we must regard as pernicious causes; not *because* something better is coming to replace it: the kind of causes which lead to its disappearance will, if we cannot control them, supersede it by something worse.

We sometimes refer to modern society as "nomadic": but this term veils its horrors by an analogy with the past, and there is no analogy.[9] For any past society that could be described as nomadic was a society that moved about compactly, carrying its religion and its culture, such as they were, with it. We are tending to become nomads of a different kind, spiritually still more than in space, and each man moving by himself, from nowhere to nowhere. Communal religion needs settled communities in which to flourish; and once communal religion goes, most individual religion goes. It is the exceptional man who can retire to the desert to pray – and the still more exceptional man who can maintain his devotional life in a railway waiting-room full of strangers. So true is it that in the Faith we are members one of another. Readers of *Christendom* do not need to be reminded that the agricultural community is the most stable.[10*] The agricultural labourer has been perhaps less affected by Nonconformity and certainly less affected (partly because of the conservatism of the rural community as a whole) by religious revivals within the Church of England, than any other member of society, in the past two or three generations. But in the small agricultural community there remains the vestige of the ancient religious-social complex. We have here two problems to solve: the general one of preserving and developing the rural community, and the specifically religious one of spreading the Faith among its members: neither of these problems can be solved by itself.

In paying attention to the rural community, however, we cannot afford to neglect the new arrangement of classes, the new incidence of balance of cultural power, which is coming into existence, which is already here, and which cannot be exorcised. It seems to me probable that – short of some catastrophic collapse of the machine, some decimation by famine or plague, or merely the dwindling of the population – our immediate prospect is that of a multiplication of technicians and bureaucrats. By technicians I mean everyone who is concerned with machinery, and whose ambition in life, if he has any ambition, from the least skilled garage attendant up, will be to become a more skilled and more highly paid engineer; by bureaucrat I mean everyone who lives on a salary from the Government or from some large and impersonal organization. Such people are obviously extremely mobile; and the more agriculture and mining can be mechanized – there must be a limit to such mechanization somewhere – the more of them, proportionately, there will be. The more intelligent and able will be the more nomadic; their "careers" will take them to higher steps in different places; only the dullest will remain fixed in the same place. A successful bank official has usually served in various branches of a large joint stock bank, in different parts of England; and proceeds, via the chief branch in some large provincial town, to the City Office or Head Office in London. Obviously, it is an advantage for the men at the top to have had as varied an experience of banking in various parts of the country as possible: nor am I contending that a society in which *everybody* lived and died in the place in which he was born would be a healthy or progressive one. The problem on which I am trying to fix attention at this point is that of the healthy proportion of mobility and fixity of population in a country; and our peril at present is rather that of excessive mobility. And this peril is increased by an attitude towards education which regards it as primarily an opportunity for earning more money and improving one's social position: but that is another story.

The problem just here is that of the classes of society represented by the technician and the bureaucrat, as I have defined them. Under the influence, perhaps, of Karl Marx, at second or third or fourth hand usually, we have been hypnotized for the past twenty years by the word "proletariat." In the eyes of Left Wing sympathizers, and consequently in the eyes of alarmed Conservatives, this "proletariat" appears as a compact body of sturdy, formidable dockers, navvies, miners, humble machine tenders, and other unskilled labour. They are depicted as having no individual ambitions, under no temptation to get the better of each other, and only concerned for the improvement of the condition of their class as a whole. The people who pass by the name of "proletariat" are very well known, and so are their wives and children, to Catholic priests in industrial areas; and I have no ill to speak of them. But may it not be that the next phase of our culture will leave these people very much as they are, and that the dominant influence may be that of the class which will tend to provide most of the technicians and bureaucrats – in other words, the lower middle class? I hinted at this possibility in a note to my essay on *The Idea of a Christian Society*;[11] and I have just had the gratification of reading what appears to me some confirmation of it by an author who has vastly superior claim to your attention when speaking of such matters than I have. Those who read Karl Mannheim's *Man and Society* will recognize his authority as a sociologist.[12] On page 102 I find the following paragraph:

> Recognizing this fact, we may now ask the question: "Why did culture not take on a mass character at the time when the proletariat came forth for the first time with its own cultural ambitions, and began to exert a cultural influence? Why did the negative symptoms of cultural decay become visible for the first time only when the democratization of culture began to affect classes other than the proletariat?" To explain this

> we must ask first of all which social classes have really been taking political as well as cultural leadership into their own hands of late. The answer is, the lower middle class. The minor employees, petty officials, artisans, small business men, small peasants, and impoverished *rentiers*.

I should add that in his classification at the end of this paragraph Professor Mannheim is presumably drawing on his knowledge of Central Europe, and that the taxonomy might be slightly different if he had had English society specifically in mind.

If, as I assume, we conceive our task as both to work for society and to work in and on society – [if] we work both for a society in which people can be Christians, and for a society of Christians – this is surely a consideration of great importance. The class I have in mind is, I have suggested, the most mobile. I should imagine that the ancestral background of a large part of its recruits was Non-conformist, and that it was a background which, alas, is rapidly disappearing into its past. The important point is that it is as a class, the most remote and difficult of access to-day, to either Anglican or Roman or Non-conformist influence and evangelization. Its influence on culture, on art and literature, on current morality, is in proportion to its profitability to those who can exploit it. I am not thinking primarily of its importance at elections – that is perhaps the least significant aspect, for political power is relatively indifferent to it – but of its financial value to providers of entertainment on the stage, the screen, or the air; in the press, and to manufacturers of mechanical toys; to all to whose interest it is to please, flatter, distract or stupefy with attractions and incitements to self-indulgence. To such a society, freed from social customs only to be subjected to a more insidious form of control, the parish system has become largely obsolete and irrelevant.

My account of the tendencies of present-day society may well be, owing to my limited knowledge and field of view, incorrect; but if the foregoing conclusions are correct, I believe them to be important. If we are concerned with the making of a Christian England we must take account, not only of institutions, political and economic, that need reform or revolution; and not only of the individual abstracted from his environment, as a soul to be saved, but of the social situation that is forming under our eyes. Our first need is always, of course, the Love of God and a sound Catholic doctrine; the second, to understand the actual situation and the material upon which we have to work; the third, to adapt procedure to the data, and to make the most of what opportunities can be discerned. It is necessary also to have a clear view of the End, of the kind of society – not as something utopian, but as something possible in relation to human nature and divine grace – we want; so that we may at any moment determine our position, and our deflection from the ideal course, by reference to a fixed point.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology was organized annually by the Church Union Association for Church Social Action. Founded in 1925, the Summer School was closely connected with the Christendom Group, led by Maurice Reckitt, which sought to elaborate a distinctly Christian sociology. Reckitt published TSE's prefatory essay alongside others by E. I. Watkin and Philip Mairet in the June issue of *Christendom: A Journal of Christian Sociology*, which he edited.

The 16th Summer School was originally scheduled for 22-26 July 1940 at St. Hilda's College, Oxford. It was postponed, however, as Reckitt explained in the Sept issue of *Christendom*, due to the "imminent threat of invasion," which made it impossible for parish priests to leave their charges (212). Stripped of the epithet "Summer," the School finally met Sept 30–Oct 4. Its 32-page syllabus, *The English Situation* (London and Southampton: Camelot Press, 1940), comprises an introduction and three sections of discussion by Reckitt and George Every, a set of questions by Ruth Kenyon (26-30), and a bibliography (31-32).

2. The first section of the syllabus, written by Every and titled "Social Elements in the English Tradition Civil and Religious: Their Strength and Weakness," recounts the development of the English state and its relation to the Church from the medieval period through the nineteenth century. "Social Basis of Religious Groupings," its final subsection, focuses on the associations of the Anglican and nonconformist churches with particular social classes and political theories, bringing the syllabus's historical narrative up to the present day.

3. The works of Lord Stamp, a Wesleyan Methodist who measured modern economic ideas against biblical precepts, include *The Christian Ethic as an Economic Factor* (1926), *Motive and Method in a Christian Order* (1936), and *Christianity and Economics* (1938).

4. This "old association" and its breakdown is discussed by Every in the syllabus (9-10).

5. TSE discusses the relation of religious to social life in *ICS* (5.697-701).

6. Every comments in the syllabus: "In a well-known passage of his *History of England* Macaulay called attention to the close historical connection between the Puritan and Nonconformist tradition and the Whig or Liberal party. Others have called attention to the connection between the sects and the rise of banking and manufactures. Many of the early bankers were Quakers, and most of the Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Birmingham manufacturers were by family tradition Quakers, Congregationalists, or Unitarians of Presbyterian ancestry. The Anglican Church on the other hand had no such intimate connection with the rise of industry" (9).

7. The doctrine of Erastianism (misattributed to the Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus, 1524-83) advocates the primacy of the state over the church in ecclesiastical matters. TSE is responding, again, to a remark of Every's: "Anglo-Catholicism lost its traditional connection with the Tory party when Toryism ceased to champion the Church and the agricultural interest and became in effect the party of the Conservative middle classes" (10).

8. A fixture in the English literary canon, John Bunyan's allegorical *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come* was published in 1678.

9. The final pages of TSE's paper are launched by Every's concluding sentence: "It may be that the very difficulty of maintaining the parochial system in urban areas has been a constant reminder to the Church that she cannot permanently acquiesce in the structure of a civilisation which allows people no firm roots in their homes and in the places where they are, and that no modification of that condition which will leave men slaves to machines in the hands of the State instead of in the hands of a private capitalist can really alter the situation" (11).

10*. TSE's note: "I am told that in Northumbria it is the practice of farmers to change their farms from time to time. My informant did not know the reason for this custom, or whether it works beneficially; but in any case it is all within a local area having the same culture."

11. See 5.723-25.

12. Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction: Studies in Modern Social Structure* (London: Kegan Paul, 1940). TSE was shortly to review the book in "Man and Society" (6.74).

Autobiographical Note
Harvard Class of 1910, Thirtieth Anniversary Report
Cambridge, MA: Cosmos Press, 1940. 66-67

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

OCCUPATION: Director of Faber & Faber Ltd., 24, Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

MARRIED: Vivienne Haigh Haigh-Wood, London, England, June 26, 1915.

Published the following books: *Collected Poems*, 1936; *Essays Ancient & Modern*, 1936; *The Family Reunion*, 1939; *Practical Cats*, 1939; *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 1939, all published in England by Faber & Faber and in America by Harcourt Brace.[1]

Hon. LL.D. (Edinburgh), Hon. Litt.D. (Cambridge, Bristol, Leeds). Hon. Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Editorial Committee, *The Christian News-Letter*; Editorial Committee, *The New English Weekly*. Closed down *The Criterion* (1922-39) in January, 1939.

Season 1936-37 largely taken up with work in connection with the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State (July 1937). Member of the Archbishops' Committee which prepared this conference.

NOTE

1. Here TSE lists only his books published since the class's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Report (see 5.247). *Murder in the Cathedral*, published in May 1935, has slipped between the cracks. Also omitted is *The Waste Land and Other Poems*, published in Feb 1940. Though it appeared in the *NEW* in Mar 1940 and was twice reprinted as an unbound supplement, *East Coker* was not published in book form until Sept; thus its absence from the present report, published in June.

Man and Society

A review of *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, by Karl Mannheim

London: Kegan Paul, 1940. Pp. xxii + 469.

The Spectator, 164 (7 June 1940) 782

Dr. Karl Mannheim is a sociologist, indeed, one of the most distinguished of living sociologists; and this massive work has the inexorable formality and complete apparatus (with seventy-three pages of bibliography) that one expects of continental scholarship. It is also difficult reading; though the difficulty of Dr. Mannheim's style is not due to any imperfection of English, and not, as with much American writing in this field, to the employment of a technical jargon. The vocabulary is that of any educated person. The difficulty of reading is due rather to a conscientious thoroughness, which prevents the author from passing any point until he has considered it from every aspect, and keeps the impatient reader marching at his own slow pace; it is also due to a judicial and remarkably impartial temper of mind, which refuses to present the difficult as if it were simple, or to allow prejudice or emotion to usurp the province of thinking.

It would seem at first, therefore, that this book is one which should be reviewed only by a professional sociologist for the benefit of other sociologists. If that were so, it would hardly be reviewed in these columns, and certainly not by this reviewer. This is, in fact, a book which everyone seriously interested in the future of our society ought to read; and being the work of a mind not only powerful and learned, but intelligent and widely cultivated, and possessed of urbanity and wisdom, it is profitable reading quite independently of our prejudices either for or against the science of which the author is an exponent. The value of reading it is not dependent upon our accepting any particular conclusions, but resides rather in giving us a widened consciousness of the contemporary situation; this is, indeed, one of that small number of books an acquaintance with which becomes "experience."[1] To compare it with any other book published within the last few years must be misleading, but I hope that it will at least be read by all those to whom the names of Borkenau and Peter Drucker have significance.[2]

I cannot attempt any account of the whole field that the book covers; the most that one can do is to suggest the assumptions from which it starts. The dilemma of modern society is the apparent necessity of choice between freedom and organisation. The future of totalitarian society may seem very doubtful; its structure may be very brittle, its cohesion superficial; its ability to preserve even the level of civilisation which it inherited may vanish; but it has undoubted advantages of efficiency in the present, and might conceivably succeed in bringing all other forms of social order to its own condition, even though that condition be deplorable. To Mannheim, as to many other thoughtful minds, the totalitarian order is only a local attempt to cope with a malady which infects the whole world; it is a specific which only alters the phase of the disease. Society cannot be restored to the nineteenth-century situation; it must alter its aims. Society cannot return to any earlier degree of simplicity; it can only proceed to a more intelligent and thorough organisation. But freedom of some kind is also essential for human beings; so the problem is, in what areas of life are we to have organisation and control, and in what areas are we to have freedom of action by voluntary associations and by individuals? Hence the phrase, which Dr. Mannheim has put into currency, "planning for freedom."[3]

Such is a very crude summary of the premisses of the book. Incidental to their elaboration is a great deal of very penetrating analysis of the contemporary situation and its origins. The first impression of the reader on reviewing the author's elaborate armament of social techniques, social controls and scientific authority may be one of panic; or he may be unfairly biased by memories of one or another of Mr. Wells's flimsier inventions. Overcome by the prospect of all this planning, the reader may wonder whether the "freedom" will not become illusory, and whether, human nature being what it is, the result will be any more tolerable than what has already been produced in Germany. One reason why people may respond in this way is that most of us, however radical, progressive or open-minded we flatter ourselves to be, have an unconscious determination towards the past: we tend to escape into the past and into the future at the same time, and refuse to acknowledge that the present is what it is and not another thing. But there is a rejoinder of another kind. Dr. Mannheim is quite clear in understanding that "techniques" such as he is concerned with are neutral. He is quite ready to admit that they can be used for evil purposes as well as good. But there, he would say, they are: for better or worse, we have a "mass" society; and if we do not study how to use the techniques for good, then we must certainly be prepared to see them used for evil. And when we have read and pondered his whole discussion we must face the question: "What is the alternative?" It can only be, I believe, that which we may call the "dark age attitude" – waiting, perhaps for many generations, for the storm of the machine age to blow over; retiring, with a few of the best books, to a small self-contained community, to till the soil and milk the cow. That, like extreme pacifism, is an attitude with which there is no argument. But if we still look for any other attitude to adopt we must adjust our minds to consider Mannheim's proposals with equanimity.

One reason why this book is so substantial and impressive is the consistency with which the author confines himself to his terms of reference: this may cause misunderstanding on the part of those who hastily assume that he ought to be doing something that he has not attempted. And even if we understand the limitations I do not suggest we shall all accept his analysis everywhere. For instance, in his very important discussion of the nature of *élites* he speaks of selection on the basis of *blood*, *property* and *achievement*, as if these represented a simple progression from an aristocratic, through a bourgeois, to a mass society. It might be argued, I think, that in the most productive periods of civilisation there had been all three, and that they had overlapped and partly fused. It is perhaps owing partly to the disintegration of *élites* that we may be considered to have no effective *élite* at all at the present time. But Dr. Mannheim reminds us that "[w]e have no clear idea how the selection of *élites* would work in an open mass society in which only the principle of achievement mattered" [91]; he has no more illusions about the future than about the past. He only asks the questions: "What is the actual situation?" and "What, if we are to do anything, should we do about it?" That his answers are in terms of sociology, and not in those of religion, ethics, economics or political idealism, is a limitation which only affirms the value of the book.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Writing to Mannheim on 20 May 1940, TSE remarked of *Man and Society*: "The question of how much one 'accepts' is irrelevant: it is not a book to be judged in that way. The main point, it seems to me, is that this is one of the small number of books which state something that one must thereafter always take into account. The question, for instance, of how much (out of what I can understand) of *Das Kapital* I would 'accept' is for me a minor question: the first thing is that such books enlarge one's consciousness of the elements in a problem."

2. Franz Borkenau (1900-57), Austrian-born sociologist. In his biography *Vilfredo Pareto* (1936), cited by Mannheim, Borkenau theorizes the rise of totalitarianism in terms of the "circulation of elites." His *The Spanish Cockpit*, published in 1937 by Faber, is, as its subtitle asserts, "an eyewitness account of the political and social conflicts of the Spanish Civil War." In *The New German Empire* (1939), he attacks Nazism as inexorably expansionist and warns against appeasement of Hitler.

Peter Drucker (1909-2005), Austrian-born political philosopher, lived in London from 1933 to 1937 before emigrating permanently to the United States, where he became a major figure in business management. In the work under review, Mannheim refers to Drucker's *The End of Economic Man: A Study of the New Totalitarianism* (1939), which traces the origin of totalitarianism in Europe to the failure of the established political and economic ideologies, including Marxism. The book correctly predicted the Nazi-Soviet pact and foresaw the impossibility of a lasting peace with Hitler. In a letter of 12 Feb 1940, TSE recommended Drucker's book to Ise Frank (Mrs. Walter) Gropius as "one of the most impressive" of the "innumerable" published works on Nazism.

3. The phrase appears most notably in part 5 (237-366) of the book under review but also in a Moot paper (April 1939), whence other participants in the Moot became early adopters.

Yeats[1]*

The generations of poetry in our age seem to cover a span of about twenty years.[2]† I do not mean that the best work of any poet is limited to twenty years: I mean that it is about that length of time before a new school or style of poetry appears. By the time, that is to say, that a man is fifty, he has behind him a kind of poetry written by men of seventy, and before him another kind written by men of thirty. That is my position at present, and if I live another twenty years I shall expect to see still another younger school of poetry. One's relation to Yeats, however, does not fit into this scheme. When I was a young man at the university, in America, just beginning to write verse, Yeats was already a considerable figure in the world of poetry, and his early period was well defined.[3] I cannot remember that his poetry at that stage made any deep impression upon me. A very young man, who is himself stirred to write, is not primarily critical or even widely appreciative. He is looking for masters who will elicit his consciousness of what he wants to say himself, of the kind of poetry that is in him to write. The taste of an adolescent writer is intense, but narrow: it is determined by personal needs. The kind of poetry that I needed, to teach me the use of my own voice, did not exist in English at all; it was only to be found in French. For this reason the poetry of the young Yeats hardly existed for me until after my enthusiasm had been won by the poetry of the older Yeats; and by that time – I mean, from 1919 on – my own course of evolution was already determined.[4] Hence, I find myself regarding him, from one point of view, as a contemporary and not a predecessor; and from another point of view, I can share the feelings of younger men, who came to know and admire him by that work from 1919 on, which was produced while they were adolescent.

Certainly, for the younger poets of England and America, I am sure that their admiration for Yeats's poetry has been wholly good. His idiom was too different for there to be any danger of imitation, his opinions too different to flatter and confirm their prejudices. It was good for them to have the spectacle of an unquestionably great living poet, whose style they were not tempted to echo and whose ideas opposed those in vogue among them. You will not see, in their writing, more than passing evidences of the impression he made, but the work, and the man himself as poet, have been of the greatest significance to them for all that. This may seem to contradict what I have been saying about the kind of poetry that a young poet chooses to admire. But I am really talking about something different. Yeats would not have this influence had he not become a great poet; but the influence of which I speak is due to the figure of the poet himself, to the integrity of his passion for his art and his craft which provided such an impulse for his extraordinary development. When he visited London he liked to meet and talk to younger poets. People have sometimes spoken of him as arrogant and overbearing. I never found him so; in his conversations with a younger writer I always felt that he offered terms of equality, as to a fellow worker, a practitioner of the same mistery.[5] It was, I think, that, unlike many writers, he cared more for poetry than for his own reputation as a poet or his picture of himself as a poet. Art was greater than the artist: and this feeling he communicated to others; which was why younger men were never ill at ease in his company.

This, I am sure, was part of the secret of his ability, after becoming unquestionably the master, to remain always a contemporary. Another is the continual development of which I have spoken. This has become almost a commonplace of criticism of his work. But while it is often mentioned, its causes and its nature have not been often analysed. One reason, of course, was simply concentration and hard work. And behind that is character: I mean the special character of the artist as artist – that is, the force of character by which Dickens, having exhausted his first inspiration, was able in middle age to proceed to such a masterpiece, so different from his early work, as *Bleak House*.[6] It is difficult and unwise to generalize about ways of composition – so many men, so many ways – but it is my experience that towards middle age a man has three choices: to stop writing altogether, to repeat himself with perhaps an increasing skill of virtuosity, or by taking thought to adapt himself to middle age and find a different way of working. Why are the later long poems of Browning and Swinburne mostly unread? It is, I think, because one gets the essential Browning or Swinburne entire in earlier poems; and in the later, one is reminded of the early freshness which they lack, without being made aware of any compensating new qualities. When a man is engaged in work of abstract thought – if there is such a thing as wholly abstract thought outside of the mathematical and the physical sciences – his mind can mature, while his emotions either remain the same or only atrophy, and it will not matter. But maturing as a poet means maturing as the whole man, experiencing new emotions appropriate to one's age, and with the same intensity as the emotions of youth.

One form, a perfect form, of development is that of Shakespeare, one of the few poets whose work of maturity is just as exciting as that of their early manhood. There is, I think, a difference between the development of Shakespeare and Yeats, which makes the latter case still more curious. With Shakespeare, one sees a slow, continuous development of mastery of his craft of verse, and the poetry of middle age seems implicit in that of early maturity. After the first few verbal exercises you say of each piece of work: "This is the perfect expression of the sensibility of that stage of his development." That a poet should develop at all, that he should find something new to say, and say it equally well, in middle age, has always something miraculous about it. But in the case of Yeats the kind of development seems to me different. I do not want to give the impression that I regard his earlier and his later work almost as if they had been written by two different men. Returning to his earlier poems after making a close acquaintance with the later, one sees, to begin with, that in technique there was a slow and continuous development of what is always the same medium and idiom. And when I say development, I do not mean that many of the early poems, for what they are, are not as beautifully written as they could be. There are some, such as "Who Goes with Fergus?," which are as perfect of their kind as anything in the language. But the best, and the best-known of them, have this limitation: that they are as satisfactory in isolation, as "anthology pieces," as they are in the context of his other poems of the same period.

I am obviously using the term "anthology piece" in a rather special sense. In any anthology, you find some poems which give you complete satisfaction and delight in themselves, such that you are hardly curious who wrote them, hardly want to look further into the work of that poet. There are others, not necessarily so perfect or complete, which make you irresistibly curious to know more of that poet through his other work. Naturally, this distinction applies only to short poems, those in which a man has been able to put only a part of his mind, if it is a mind of any size. With some such you feel at once that the man who wrote them must have had a great deal more to say, in different contexts, of equal interest. Now among all the poems in Yeats's earlier volumes I find only in a line here or there, that sense of a unique personality which makes one sit up in excitement and eagerness to learn more about the author's mind and feelings. The intensity of Yeats's own emotional experience hardly appears. We have sufficient evidence of the intensity of experience of his youth, but it is from the retrospections in some of his later work that we have our evidence.

I have, in early essays, extolled what I called impersonality in art, and it may seem that, in giving as a reason for the superiority of Yeats's later work the greater expression of personality in it, I am contradicting myself.[7] It may be that I expressed myself badly, or that I had only an adolescent grasp of that idea – as I can never bear to re-read my own prose writings, I am willing to leave the point unsettled – but I think now, at least, that the truth of the matter is as follows. There are two forms of impersonality: that which is natural to the mere skilful craftsman, and that which is more and more achieved by the maturing artist. The first is that of what I have called the "anthology piece," of a lyric by Lovelace or Suckling, or of Campion, a finer poet than either. The second impersonality is that of the poet who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol. And the strange thing is that Yeats, having been a great craftsman in the first kind, became a great poet in the second. It is not that he became a different man, for, as I have hinted, one feels sure that the intense experience of youth had been lived through – and indeed, without this early experience he could never have attained anything of the wisdom which appears in his later writing. But he had to wait for a later maturity to find expression of early experience; and this makes him, I think, a unique and especially interesting poet.

Consider the early poem which is in every anthology, "When you old and grey and full of sleep," or "A Dream of Death" in the same volume of 1893.[8] They are beautiful poems, but only craftsman's work, because one does not feel present in them the particularity which must provide the material for the general truth. By the time of the volume of 1904 there is a development visible in a very lovely poem, "The Folly of Being Comforted," and in "Adam's Curse"; something is coming through, and in beginning to speak as a particular man he is beginning to speak for man.[9] This is clearer still in the poem "Peace," in the 1910 volume.[10] But it is not fully evinced until the volume of 1914, in the violent and terrible epistle dedicatory of *Responsibilities*, with the great lines

Pardon that for a barren passion's sake,
Although I have come close on forty-nine . . .[11]

And the naming of his age in the poem is significant. More than half a lifetime to arrive at this freedom of speech. It is a triumph.

There was much also for Yeats to work out of himself, even in technique. To be a younger member of a group of poets, none of them certainly of anything like his stature, but further developed in their limited path, may arrest for a time a man's development of idiom. Then again, the weight of the pre-Raphaelite prestige must have been tremendous. The Yeats of the Celtic twilight – who seems to me[12†] to have been more the Yeats of the pre-Raphaelite twilight – uses Celtic folklore almost as William Morris uses Scandinavian folklore. His longer narrative poems bear the mark of Morris. Indeed, in the pre-Raphaelite phase, Yeats is by no means the least of the pre-Raphaelites. I may be mistaken, but the play, "The Shadowy Waters," seems to me one of the most perfect expressions of the vague enchanted beauty of that school: yet it strikes me – this may be an impertinence on my part[13†] – as the western seas descried through the back window of a house in Kensington, an Irish myth for the Kelmscott Press;[14] and when I try to visualize the speakers in the play, they have the great dim, dreamy eyes of the knights and ladies of Burne-Jones. I think that the phase in which he treated Irish legend in the manner of Rossetti or Morris is a phase of confusion. He did not master this legend until he made it a vehicle for his own creation of character – not, really, until he began to write the *Plays for Dancers*.[15] The point is, that in becoming more Irish, not in subject-matter but in expression, he became at the same time universal.

The points that I particularly wish to make about Yeats's development are two. The first, on which I have already touched, is that to have accomplished what Yeats did in the middle and later years is a great and permanent example – which poets-to-come should study with reverence – of what I have called Character of the Artist: a kind of moral, as well as intellectual, excellence. The second point, which follows naturally after what I have said in criticism of the lack of complete emotional expression in his early work, is that Yeats is pre-eminently the poet of middle age. By this I am far from meaning that he is a poet only for middle-aged readers: the attitude towards him of younger poets who write in English, the world over, is enough evidence to the contrary. Now, in theory, there is no reason why a poet's inspiration or material should fail, in middle age or at any time before senility. For a man who is capable of experience finds himself in a different world in every decade of his life; as he sees it with different eyes, the material of his art is continually renewed. But in fact, very few poets have shown this capacity of adaptation to the years. It requires, indeed, an exceptional honesty and courage to face the change. Most men either cling to the experiences of youth, so that their writing becomes an insincere mimicry of their earlier work, or they leave their passion behind, and write only from the head, with a hollow and wasted virtuosity. There is another and even worse temptation: that of becoming dignified, of becoming public figures with only a public existence – coat-racks hung with decorations and distinctions, doing, saying, and even thinking and feeling only what they believe the public expects of them.[16] Yeats was not that kind of poet: and it is, perhaps, a reason why young men should find his later poetry more acceptable than older men easily can. For the young can see him as a poet who in his work remained in the best sense always young, who even in one sense became young as he aged. But the old, unless they are stirred to something of the honesty with oneself expressed in the poetry, will be shocked by such a revelation of what a man really is and remains. They will refuse to believe that *they* are like that.

> You think it horrible that lust and rage
> Should dance attendance upon my old age;
> They were not such a plague when I was young:
> What else have I to spur me into song?[17]

These lines are very impressive and not very pleasant, and the sentiment has recently been criticized by an English critic whom I generally respect.[18] But I think he misread them. I do not read them as a personal confession of a man who differed from other men, but of a man who was essentially the same as most other men; the only difference is in the greater clarity, honesty and vigour. To what honest man, old enough, can these sentiments be entirely alien? They can be subdued and disciplined by religion, but who can say that they are dead? Only those to whom the maxim of La Rochefoucauld applies: "Quand les vices nous quittent, nous nous flattons de la créance que c'est nous qui les quittons."[19] The tragedy of Yeats's epigram is all in the last line.

Similarly, the play "Purgatory" is not very pleasant, either.[20] There are aspects of it which I do not like myself. I wish he had not given it this title, because I cannot accept a purgatory in which there is no hint, or at least no emphasis upon Purgation. But, apart from the extraordinary theatrical skill with which he has put so much action within the compass of a very short scene of but little movement, the play gives a masterly exposition of the emotions of an old man. I think that the epigram I have just quoted seems to me just as much to be taken in a dramatic sense as the play "Purgatory." The lyric poet – and Yeats was always lyric, even when dramatic – can speak for every man, or for men very different from himself; but to do this he must for the moment be able to identify himself with every man or other men; and it is only his imaginative power of becoming this that deceives some readers into thinking that he is speaking for and of himself alone – especially when they prefer not to be implicated.

I do not wish to emphasize this aspect only of Yeats's poetry of age. I would call attention to the beautiful poem in *The Winding Stair*, "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz," in which the picture at the beginning, of

Two girls in silk kimonos, both
Beautiful, one a gazelle,

gets great intensity from the shock of the later line

When withered old and skeleton gaunt,[21†]

and also to "Coole Park," beginning

I meditate upon a swallow's flight,
Upon an aged woman and her house.[22]

In such poems one feels that the most lively and desirable emotions of youth have been preserved to receive their full and due expression in retrospect. For the interesting feelings of age are not just different feelings; they are feelings into which the feelings of youth are integrated.

Yeats's development in his dramatic poetry is as interesting as that in his lyrical poetry. I have spoken of him as having been a lyric poet – in a sense in which I should not think of myself, for instance, as lyric; and by this I mean rather a certain kind of selection of emotion rather than particular metrical forms. But there is no reason why a lyric poet should not also be a dramatic poet; and to me Yeats is the type of lyrical dramatist. It took him many years to evolve the dramatic form suited to his genius. When he first began to write plays, poetic drama meant plays written in blank verse. Now, blank verse has been a dead metre for a long time. It would be outside of my frame to go into all the reasons for that now: but it is obvious that a form which was handled so supremely well by Shakespeare has its disadvantages. If you are writing a play of the same type as Shakespeare's, the reminiscence is oppressive; if you are writing a play of a different type, it is distracting. Furthermore, as Shakespeare is so much greater than any dramatist who has followed him, blank verse can hardly be dissociated from the life of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: it can hardly catch the rhythms with which English is spoken nowadays. I think that if anything like regular blank verse is ever to be re-established, it can be after a long departure from it, during the course of which it will have liberated itself from period associations. At the time of Yeats's early plays it was not possible to use anything else for a poetry play: that is not a criticism of Yeats himself, but an assertion that changes in verse forms come at one moment and not at another. His early verse-plays, including "The Green Helmet," which is written in a kind of irregular rhymed fourteener, have a good deal of beauty in them, and, at least, they are the best verse-plays written in their time.[23] And even in these one notices some development of irregularity in the metric. Yeats did not quite invent a new metre, but the blank verse of his later plays shows a great advance towards one; and what is most astonishing is the virtual abandonment of blank verse metre in "Purgatory." One device used with great success in some of the later plays is the lyrical choral interlude. But another, and important, cause of improvement is the gradual purging out of poetical ornament. This, perhaps, is the most painful part of the labour, so far as the versification goes, of the modern poet who tries to write a play in verse. The course of improvement is towards a greater and greater starkness. The beautiful line for its own sake is a luxury dangerous even for the poet who has made himself a virtuoso of the technique of the theatre. What is necessary is a beauty which shall not be in the line or the isolable passage, but woven into the dramatic texture itself; so that you can hardly say whether the lines give grandeur to the drama, or whether it is the drama which turns the words into poetry. (One of the most thrilling lines in *King Lear* is the simple

Never, never, never, never, never

but, apart from a knowledge of the context, how can you say that it is poetry, or even competent verse?) Yeats's purification of his verse becomes much more evident in the four *Plays for Dancers* and in the two in the posthumous volume: those, in fact, in which he had found his right and final dramatic form.[24]

It is in the first three of the *Plays for Dancers*, also, that he shows the internal, as contrasted with the external, way of handling Irish myth of which I have spoken earlier. In the earlier plays, as in the earlier poems, about legendary heroes and heroines, I feel that the characters are treated, with the respect that we pay to legend, as creatures of a different world from ours. In the later plays they are universal men and women. I should, perhaps, not include "The Dreaming of the Bones" quite in this category, because Dermot and Dervorgilla are characters from modern history, not figures of pre-history; but I would remark in support of what I have been saying that in this play these two lovers have something of the universality of Dante's Paolo and Francesca, and this the younger Yeats could not have given them. So with the Cuchulain of "The Hawk's Well," the Cuchulain, Emer and Eithne of "The Only Jealousy of Emer"; the myth is not presented for its own sake, but as a vehicle for a situation of universal meaning.

I see at this point that I may have given the impression, contrary to my desire and my belief, that the poetry and the plays of Yeats's earlier period can be ignored in favour of his later work. You cannot divide the work of a great poet so sharply as that. Where there is the continuity of such a positive personality and such a single purpose, the later work cannot be understood, or properly enjoyed, without a study and appreciation of the earlier; and the later work again reflects light upon the earlier, and shows us beauty and significance not before perceived. We have also to take account of the historical conditions. As I have said above, Yeats was born into the end of a literary movement, and an English movement at that: only those who have toiled with language know the labour and constancy required to free oneself from such influences – yet, on the other hand, once we are familiar with the older voice, we can hear its individual tones even in his earliest published verse. In my own time of youth there seemed to be no immediate great powers of poetry either to help or to hinder, either to learn from or to rebel against, yet I can understand the difficulty of the other situation, and the magnitude of the task. With the verse-play, on the other hand, the situation is reversed, because Yeats had nothing, and we have had Yeats. He started writing plays at a time when the prose-play of contemporary life seemed triumphant, with an indefinite future stretching before it; when the comedy of light farce dealt only with certain privileged strata of metropolitan life; and when the serious play tended to be an ephemeral tract on some transient social problem. We can begin to see now that even the imperfect early attempts he made are probably more permanent literature than the plays of Shaw;[25†] and that his dramatic work as a whole may prove a stronger defence against the successful urban Shaftesbury Avenue vulgarity which he opposed as stoutly as they. Just as, from the beginning, he made and thought his poetry in terms of speech and not in terms of print, so in the drama he always meant to write plays to be played and not merely to be read. He cared, I think, more for the theatre as an organ for the expression of the consciousness of a people, than as a means to his own fame or achievement; and I am convinced that it is only if you serve it in this spirit that you can hope to accomplish anything worth doing with it. Of course, he had some great advantages, the recital of which does not rob him of any of his glory: his colleagues, a people with a natural and unspoilt gift for speech and for acting. It is impossible[26†] to disentangle what he did for the Irish theatre from what the Irish theatre did for him. From this point of advantage, the idea of the poetic drama was kept alive when everywhere else it had been driven underground. I do not know where our debt to him as a dramatist ends – and in time, it will not end until that drama itself ends. In his occasional writings on dramatic topics he has asserted certain principles to which we must hold fast: such as the primacy of the poet over the actor, and of the actor over the scene-painter; and the principle that the theatre, while it need not be concerned only with "the people" in the narrow Russian sense, must be for the people; that to be permanent it must concern itself with fundamental situations. Born into a world in which the doctrine of "Art for Art's sake" was generally accepted, and living on into one in which art has been asked to be instrumental to social purposes, he held firmly to the right view which is between these, though not in any way a compromise between them, and showed that an artist, by serving his art with entire integrity, is at the same time rendering the greatest service he can to his own nation and to the whole world.

To be able to praise, it is not necessary to feel complete agreement; and I do not dissimulate[27†] the fact that there are aspects of Yeats's thought and feeling which to myself are unsympathetic. I say this only to indicate the limits[28†] which I have set to my criticism. The questions of difference, objection and protest arise in the field of doctrine, and these are vital questions.[29†] I have been concerned only with the poet and dramatist, so far as these can be isolated. In the long run they cannot be wholly isolated. A full and elaborate examination of the total work of Yeats must some day be undertaken; perhaps it will need a longer perspective. There are some poets whose poetry can be considered more or less in isolation, for experience and delight. There are others whose poetry, though giving equally experience and delight, has a larger historical importance. Yeats was one of the latter: he was one of those few whose history is the history of their own time, who are a part of the consciousness of an age which cannot be understood without them. This is a very high position to assign to him: but I believe that it is one which is secure.[30]

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "The first annual Yeats Lecture, delivered to the Friends of the Irish Academy at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1940. Subsequently published in *Purpose*."

As printed in *OPP*; originally published as "The Poetry of W. B. Yeats" in *Purpose*, 12 (July/Dec 1940), 115-27.

Yeats died in Cap-Martin, France on 28 Jan 1939 and was buried in Roquebrune. On 30 Mar, after Mrs. Yeats returned to Ireland, TSE wrote her "on the occasion of the loss of the greatest living poet, to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to him for all that he did for poetry, and to send a message of sympathy to yourself." He had by then already been asked to compose a "short note" on Yeats for publication in *New Verse*. The May 1939 issue included a note by Wyndham Lewis and anticipated "a second note firmly promised for the next number by T. S. Eliot." Although TSE did write that note, as he reported to Stephen Gwynn on 16 Nov, *New Verse* folded before it could be published.

TSE at first declined the invitation to give the Yeats Memorial Lecture because he had already committed to a lecture tour in Italy; he expressed his regrets in a letter to Sean O'Faolain on 7 May 1940, and he told John Hayward on 14 May that he would "much rather have done" the Yeats lecture but saw no way around the conflicting dates. The Italian tour was canceled the next day amid rapidly deteriorating international relations, and TSE then immediately agreed to the Yeats lecture, which took place on Sunday, 30 June. Editor Desmond Hawkins solicited the lecture for publication in *Purpose*, and TSE had copies made for Yeats's widow, George, and surviving sister, Lily.

2†. TSE's introductory paragraph, published in *Purpose*, was omitted in *OPP*:

> The invitation to address you on this occasion and in this place was at the same time irresistible and terrifying. You have instituted an annual lecture in memory of the greatest poet of our time – certainly the greatest in this language, and so far as I am able to judge, in any language. This is the first lecture, and in a theatre for ever associated with his name, the centre of some of his most important activity. The responsibility which I have accepted is considerable. I have thought it fit, on this the first of these annual ceremonies, to devote my words to the work of William Butler Yeats himself: that is what I should wish to do, and what I expect you would wish to hear. But even after taking this obvious decision, my subject left me a wide range of selection. The achievement of a great poet cannot be surveyed in an hour. There are many aspects of his work – cultural, political, religious – which can be better treated by a compatriot. In what way can a visitor like myself discuss Yeats's work with the greatest freshness and with the least impertinence? It seemed to me that a certain informality, and even personality, might be permitted if I was to consider a few aspects of his poetry from the point of view of his admirers and fellow practitioners outside of Ireland, and especially in England and America.

3. By the time of TSE's graduation from Harvard in 1910, Yeats had already published over thirty books of poetry, plays, folktales, and nonfiction.

4. TSE thus dates the beginning of "the older Yeats" from the trade edition of *The Wild Swans at Coole* in 1919. For TSE's own mixed view of Yeats in that year, see "A Foreign Mind," his review of *The Cutting of an Agate* (2.72).

5. TSE uses an obsolete spelling of "mystery" (OED).

6. Dickens published *Bleak House* serially in 1852 to 1853, at age 40.

7. The early essay TSE has most obviously in mind is "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (2.105) but see also "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (2.212).

8. "When You Are Old" was first published in *"The Countess Kathleen" and Various Legends and Lyrics* (1892), "A Dream of Death" in *Poems* (1895). In later collections of his work, however, Yeats presented both poems as belonging to a fictitious volume called *The Rose*, which he dated 1893.

9. *In the Seven Woods* was published in 1903, though in later collections of his work Yeats gives the date as 1904.

10. *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910).

11. This poem, beginning "*Pardon, old fathers, if you still remain*," appeared untitled in Yeats's *Responsibilities*. (Later collections call it "Introductory Rhymes.") TSE quotes from its concluding lines, which continue: "*I have no child, I have nothing but a book, / Nothing but that to prove your blood and mine.*"

12†. In *Purpose*: "who, begging your pardon, seems to me"

13†. In *Purpose*: "I may be mistaken, and I may be impertinent . . . – and this is what may be an impertinence on my part"

14. Yeats subtitled "The Shadowy Waters" (1900, with revised versions published 1906 and 1907) a "dramatic poem." The Kelmscott Press was a private press founded by Morris in 1891.

15. Yeats published "The Dreaming of the Bones" and "The Only Jealousy of Emer" in *Two Plays for Dancers* (1919). With "At the Hawk's Well" and "Calvary," these works reappeared two years later in *Four Plays for Dancers*.

16. TSE's metaphor echoes Yeats's recurring figure of the old man as "a coat upon a coat-hanger" ("The Apparitions"), and perhaps his self-portrait as "A sixty-year-old smiling public man" in "Among School Children."

17. TSE quotes the entirety of "The Spur" (1938).

18. In his review of Yeats's *Last Poems and Plays*, "The Great Yeats, and the Latest," published Mar 1940 in *Scrutiny*, F. R. Leavis finds in Yeats's late work "an intensity of bitterness and an agonized sense of frustrate impotence." He quotes "The Spur" to show that this bitterness "prevails in *Last Poems and Plays*, and takes very unpleasant forms" (437-38).

19. TSE quotes La Rochefoucauld's Maxim 192. *Trans:* "When our vices leave us, we flatter ourselves with the belief that it's we who are leaving them."

20. Published in 1939, "Purgatory" was first produced the preceding year at the Abbey Theatre.

21†. *Read:* "skeleton-gaunt"

22. *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933) included both "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz" (first published 1929) and "Coole Park, 1929" (1932).

23. "The Green Helmet," sometimes subtitled "An Heroic Farce" (1910).

24. "The Death of Cuchulain" and "Purgatory" were published posthumously in *Last Poems and Two Plays* (1939).

25†. In *Purpose*: "the plays of Ibsen or of Shaw"

26†. In *Purpose*: "acting, and this theatre – it is impossible"

27†. In *Purpose*: "I have come here to do honour to the memory of a great poet. It is a pleasure to me to praise him, and to have the privilege of doing so here and before this audience; and if

I had not had the conviction of praising him in all sincerity I should not have come at all. But to be able to praise, it is not necessary to feel complete agreement; and I should not think it right to dissimulate"

28†. In *Purpose*: "I say this not in order to express my own beliefs, which I shall leave in silence, but rather to indicate the limits"

29†. In *Purpose*: "doctrine, and you have no need to be reminded how vital they are."

30. TSE was satisfied with the reception of his address, writing Montgomery Belgion on 3 July: "I think that the lecture and the broadcast [6.91] went off very well. It is a little difficult to tell when one is amongst a foreign race, who are always extremely flattering, and whose real reactions are not so easy to detect. However, the Abbey Theatre was quite full, and the audience was very attentive, and a couple of people told me afterward that they thought I had handled some of the difficulties with great tact." Regarding those "difficulties," alluded to in the lecture's final paragraph, he told Frank Morley on 15 July: "You will understand, I hope, that [the lecture] is more in the nature of an occasional eulogy or funeral oration than of a piece of cold criticism. You may be able to read more between the lines but you must remember that the occasion of the first Annual William Butler Yeats Memorial Lecture for the Friends of the Irish Academy at the Abbey Theatre imposed certain restrictions."

Poetic Drama To-Day and To-Morrow

On 5 May 1940 Sean O'Faolain contacted TSE on behalf of the Irish Academy of Letters, as its Secretary, inviting him to deliver the first Yeats Memorial Lecture and offering, "with apologies and blushes," an honorarium of five guineas. He then added, "If you felt so inclined we could arrange for a broadcast talk the following afternoon, which would add another five guineas. You are certain to have some material that you would not need to prepare, for that." TSE wrote Radio Éireann on 31 May on the question of subject matter: "I could talk about Yeats himself – that would be really an abbreviated version of my lecture. Or I could talk generally about the present situation and future of Poetic Drama. Or I could, of course, give a reading of my own verse: I suppose that you have a relatively wider public for poetry readings than we have here." The decision for poetic drama was probably made by the Irish poet Roibeárd Ó Faracháin (Robert Farren), the Talks Officer, who introduced TSE in the live broadcast and was shortly to become a director of the Abbey Theatre.

TSE read this untitled and unpublished text (TS carbon, 6 pp with holograph emendations), announced by Radio Éireann as "Poetic Drama To-Day and To-Morrow," at 7:30 pm on 1 July.

Yesterday, in talking about William Butler Yeats to an audience at the Abbey Theatre, I spoke of his contribution to the art of poetic drama.[1] I made one point which I must repeat; that of our debt to Yeats, to his colleagues of the Abbey, and to the men and women who have acted there, for keeping the poetic drama alive at a time when, but for them, it would have seemed to be utterly and forever rejected from the stage. It is a debt of which all those who struggle, in England and in America, to keep this form in the theatre, must be keenly aware. I want now to indicate briefly some of the reasons why it is now and always worth while for us to go on writing plays in verse.

Your Dublin audiences are, I believe, more qualified to appreciate verse drama than ours, just as your actors speak verse more naturally. But some of the prejudices against, and even some of the more unreasonable prejudices for, verse drama, may be in our time widespread. For the English audience, certainly, there is Shakespeare, and there is everything else. When people go to a modern verse play, they feel virtuous about it: and nothing more surely interferes with the appreciation of a work of art than for people to approve of themselves for appreciating it. They go to a poetic play in somewhat the same spirit in which they go to a charity entertainment given by incompetent amateurs – out of a sense of duty. In this way they do not expect enough, and I am afraid that sometimes authors respond by not giving enough; they feel, also, that in writing a verse play they have done something meritorious which excuses them from being judged by the ordinary standards of the theatre. Now I have always maintained that the first duty of the poet is the same as that of any other entertainer – that is, to be entertaining; and if this is the duty of a poet in writing a poem which he may expect the reader to read several times, how much more so in writing for an audience, whose attention has to be captured at once and held all the time? The poet has to be trained to do his job in the theatre, and the audience has to be trained to respond to it; but a large part of the audience's training consists in learning to be spontaneous and to be ready to admit it to themselves, when they are bored by his play, as readily as they would admit it of an ordinary commercial play.

There is another difficulty related to the first. It is that both poet and audience may conceive of a verse play as something essentially different from a prose play, a specialised and limited form of drama. If I thought of it in this way I should not consider it worth very much trouble. I am interested in verse in the theatre, not because you can do something different with it, but because you can do so much *more*. In an age and place of developed sensibility poetry ought to be the natural form of dramatic expression. It ought to be the medium for a larger public, rather than a more limited one. It is not merely that in verse you can express dramatic thought more compactly and dramatic emotion more intensely – and by *dramatic* thought, I must explain, I mean the thought of a particular character in relation to other characters in an action; it is further that poetry gives a pattern within which the characters can be related more closely than in prose. For prose tends to limit the dramatist to the more superficial planes of human existence; to exhibit men and women as isolated and self-contained units moving only on one plane of motives: poetry, on the other hand, can work on several planes at once, express the common feeling which they may share in a situation, and the deeper unconscious meaning of their intentions and acts. The visible and intelligible plot of a verse play can be the corporal form of another and less understood reality. These are exaggerated pretensions: but we who write verse must cheer ourselves up.[2†] And we find that the greater prose dramatists whose plays are literature as well as theatre, write a prose which approximates to the design of poetry. The characters of Congreve or of Synge speak in a common rhythm and a common idiom, developed far beyond the formlessness of ordinary speech. That the rhythm and the idiom is based upon the actual speech of the society to which their plays are related, I do not deny. Indeed, I make a point of asserting it: because I am sure that this is a quality which the best prose drama shares with the best verse drama: that the dramatist neither echoes the speech of a past age, nor invents an idiom unrelated to any age, but develops the best speech of the men and women whom he has known who talk his own language.

That is a point on which I should like to dwell a little longer. The poet, whatever form he uses, must have an ear for the common speech he hears about him. He must take this as he finds it: his business is to improve that speech to the condition of poetry, not to invent a poetic language of his own. And if this is true of all poetry, his success or failure will be much more clearly apparent in the drama, where it is not himself, but his characters, to whom the words belong; and where it is not from his own voice and his own personality that the words proceed, but from another man or woman playing a part. Here begins the first problem of the poet starting to write plays: he cannot simply write his own stuff and distribute it among fictitious speakers. In writing a poem, you can use a more personal idiom, and it is your own voice that you hear as you write it. In writing a play, it must be other voices that you hear, and the poetry latent in other people's speech that you must elicit.

People often wonder why poets do not remain content with the vocabulary and the verse forms inherited from older poets who have done well with them, and why poets insist on devising new forms which seem at first uglier and more disorderly. No good poet wants novelty or eccentricity for its own sake: the element of surprise in good poetry is something which remains forever, and is not only valid for its own time. But something is constantly happening to any living language; the changes in the world about us and in the lives we live are reflected in our speech; so that a verse form which once was natural, which once was a development of the way men talked in ordinary intercourse, can become artificial. I think that this superannuation has happened to blank verse; that the way in which we talk nowadays does not fit naturally into that frame. I find that blank verse is what I tend to write when I have been working too long, when I am tired or inattentive; and that when I am at my best I avoid any line which must be scanned as regular blank verse, and admit only a line here or there which can be scanned in that way. This does not imply that I think the verse of Shakespeare out of date, for Shakespeare; for the speech which was natural and right for a dead poet remains always right in his poetry. Nor do I imply that blank verse is dead forever: we may some day naturally return to it. I am only saying that I do not think it possible in our time.

And here I want to suggest an incidental reason why it is worth while to write our own poetic drama for our own time. So far as I have observed, I don't think that an actor trained in Shakespeare is necessarily good at modern verse: his practice with Shakespeare may even be a handicap. On the other hand, I do believe that practice in good modern verse plays will help an actor to speak Shakespeare better. For if he can learn to speak modern dramatic poetry, in modern idiom and preferably in modern dress, he will come to find it as natural to speak in verse as in prose; and he will be helped to avoid those two dreadful pitfalls of the stage verse speaker: either beating out each line with a monotonous thump, or slurring the rhythm as if to pretend that he is talking prose. And I think that audiences too, if they come to accept modern verse plays as normal and complete theatre, will find themselves taking Shakespeare also much more naturally, and understanding his plays better.

The task which a young poet must undertake, and the difficulties which he must face, if he really wants some day to write a good play, are enormous. In the first place, he must develop for himself a dramatic verse, which he will find means writing in a different way from that to which he has been accustomed: it must be a form of verse in which you can say the most matter of fact things necessary to the action, without their sounding absurdly pedestrian, and in which you can say the most intense and poetic things, without their sounding highfalutin. This is a long job in itself, in a period in which there is no one accepted form for dramatic verse. But a play is not merely good speeches or even living dialogue; and the poet must apprentice himself to learn all the technique of the prose dramatist. He has to work in a kind of vicious circle: because you have first to write a play good enough to be produced by somebody, in order to find out your mistakes and learn to write a better play. For a play is not finished until you have seen it on the stage, until it has had all the collaboration of producer and actors and audience. Consequently, I don't believe that a poet nowadays can expect to write a really good verse play until he has written and had produced four or five not so good plays first: so a patient, though critical audience is needed. It is in fact a life's work. But I do hope that more poets will devote themselves to this work, so that some day we may have what for Shakespeare's audiences was a common experience – the excitement of hearing actors, playing contemporary parts in a contemporary play, speaking a language which we can recognize as fundamentally what we ourselves speak in daily life, but raised to all the elevation and intensity of great poetry.

We should have a long struggle, at the best of times, to develop a new tradition of poetic drama, to train poets to master the hard work, and to educate audiences for them. The task, it seems, will be surrounded by still greater difficulties in any future to which we can at present look forward. Let me express the hope that whatever this future may be, Dublin will remain a centre where this art of high civilization can flourish.[3]

NOTES

1. See "Yeats" (6.84-87).

2†. This sentence inserted in ink.

3. On the verso of the final page, TSE has written the names and addresses of Desmond FitzGerald, with whom he spent Monday morning in the company of Joseph Hone and Brian Coffey, and Mrs. W. B. Yeats, with whom he had lunch on Monday, prior to his broadcast that evening.

Notes on Social Philosophy

Formed after the Oxford Conference of 1937 by J. H. Oldham, the Moot was a group of intellectuals who met periodically on long weekends from 1938 to 1947 to discuss religious, social, and political issues in relation to the idea of a Christian order. TSE was an active member, contributor, and respondent from the first meeting in Apr 1938. He prepared this paper for the group's ninth meeting, held 12-15 July 1940 at Old Jordans Hostel, Beaconsfield. Four other members of the twelve present were also commissioned to write short papers – pre-circulated before the meeting on Sunday, 14 July – on "Social Philosophy." The discussion focused particularly on H. A. Hodges's criticism of Natural Law in his paper. As Eric Fenn, acting as secretary, noted, Hodges's essay "represented an entire departure from the whole philosophical basis of Catholicism, which he regarded as an historical mistake. . . . The mediaeval unity was historically conditioned, and was a codification of what was 'all about you.' It was then as obviously true as it was now obviously false. You looked out of the window and you saw God and the Church. But the history of philosophy was the weaning of Europe from the belief that these principles were the fixed principles they appeared to be. The assumptions of a particular age could not be the common principles for all mankind; and we know now that there were no such common principles." Fenn's transcription of the discussion at the meeting (without the papers) is printed in *The Moot Papers*, ed. Keith Clements (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 326-37.

I propose to limit the scope of my two pages to a few remarks on one important respect in which it seems to me that social philosophy must differ in the future – or one consideration that will have to be taken account of in the future as an essential part of the art of government, a consideration that has not been recognised in the past. That is the obligation of government to interest itself in the moral education of the people. In the past, the inculcation of moral values has been the function of the Church, and with the disappearance of the power of the Church over the mass of the population, we have perhaps assumed that the conservation and development of the sense of values could vaguely be left to "human nature." But under the conditions of highly industrialised society, in a machine age, without the sanctions of religious faith, it is doubtful whether "human nature" is able to preserve its values. And by values here I mean appreciation of right and wrong in something wider than an ordinary moral sense: I include health and recreation, artistic appreciation, and a proper cuisine:

I include everything necessary for salvation and everything necessary for the preparation and enjoyment of a good soup or salad. For the modern British do not even know what to eat and drink: their minds are too lazy.

It seems probable that in the stage of society in which we are, and that with which we shall be concerned so far as we can see, Government will find itself obliged to direct and inculcate some kind of values, instead of traditional values which have disappeared, merely in order to be able to govern. This has happened abroad, and is likely to happen here. So far, I cannot see that it is in itself, in the modern world, a misfortune: the question is entirely what values are to be imposed. That the rulers of a state, however they are chosen, should take some responsibility for the morals of their people has nothing abhorrent about it. But if these rulers, however excellent and benevolent, should be themselves the makers of the system of values they adapt their people to, there are obvious and almost certainly fatal elements of danger. When they can lay down, not only the procedure by which the people shall become more virtuous, but what virtues shall be cultivated, there is no absolute standard of correction; and you will tend to get, if not a national religion, at least a national morality; and in the course of time what is right will become corrupted into whatever is efficacious to keep particular men, or a particular set of men, in power, and to forward whatever may be or become their purposes.

It is clear therefore that there must be accepted principles arrived at independently. Such problems as that of the relation and responsibilities of the individual to the group, of the individual to the family, of the living society to posterity, are vital to politics, but they are not to be settled by politicians, engaged in political action and in promoting their own power. What is needed, in short, is an impartial examination of the principles of Natural Law.[1] The distinction between Natural and Supernatural Law is probably not very important for the conduct of a Christian society; but it is important in a mixed society such as that we have: that is to say, a society in which Christians and non-Christians must co-operate, because they have all the other bonds of social unity between them except the religious.[2]

I should expect to find that the study of Natural Law comprised the study both of the general principles valid for all men at all times and in all places, and of those secondary principles applicable for a particular nation or social unit.

By what means a universally acceptable account of Natural Law is to be arrived at, relevant to the modern world, and by what process it is to be made universally accepted, is itself part of the problem. I think that it involves in the end a re-union of Christendom (though I do not suggest that it provides the fundamental reason for Christians desiring this consummation); because I think a visible and authoritative centre of allegiance outside of the nation is necessary. The matter is not so simple as that, because it is painfully evident that in our time great numbers of people have accommodated their loyalty to the Catholic Church to their obedience to their nations. How the Church can, without appealing to human baseness, compete for allegiance with temporal forces the strength of whose attraction is due to a mixture of some good with some powerfully evil motives, I do not know. It may be that little, except a constant assertion of right principles, can be accomplished until the disease of nationalism has run its course.

I maintain, however, that the point I have tried to make of the necessity for this re-education of the people's sense of values, from above, is one of immediate importance. I believe that after this war, whatever its outcome, we shall be told from many quarters that we have, in the past, allowed the country to be spoliated and neglected, and that we have allowed its people to sink into a state of physical, moral and cultural deterioration. This is true; but the reforms advocated may be as bad as the corruption, because, after a long period in which values have been allowed to go to pot, we cannot expect either appointed or self-appointed rulers to have a sense of values which will extend further than local material needs and immediate expedients. The most important point of operation of a social philosophy, may be the education in values of the political classes.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In the open discussion of Hodges's paper, TSE stated that Hodges, professor of philosophy at Reading University, "was led into a scholastic argument because the traditional Catholic view of Natural Law was too abstract and set a premium on ingenuity rather than on wisdom. The content of Natural Law lay in the field of wisdom rather than in logical argument. We were always brought back to this in some form. . . . You could not defend Natural Law, but it would turn up again and again. It was the characteristic of something objective that it should turn up again and again!" (*The Moot Papers* 332).

2. TSE said in discussion "that Hodges's statement was a correct view of Natural Law, as opposed to Kant, who maintained a view which made Natural Law a thing which the non-

Christian had a perfectly good reason for believing in. Consciousness of Natural Law did not exist for the natural man" (336).

TEXTUAL NOTE

There are several collections of Moot papers (1938-47) made by individual members, including the A. D. Lindsay papers at the University of Keele and the Michael Polanyi papers at the University of Chicago. Copies of TSE's mimeographed two-page, single-spaced paper, and those of Hodges and the other contributors, are in the Joseph Oldham collection at New College, Edinburgh (OA/14/6/96) and in the Fred Clarke papers at the Institute of Education, University of London (DC/Moo/120-27), file 17. Roger Kojecky quotes passages from TSE's paper and discusses them further in relation to Hodges's paper in *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1971), 177-79.

TSE's "Notes on Social Philosophy" was the first of three essays written for discussion at the Moot, followed in 1941 by "Revival of Christian Imagination" (6.239) and in 1944 by "On the Place and Function of the Clerisy" (6.553). Though not written expressly for the Moot, "Cultural Forces in the Human Order" was also distributed to its members for their consideration (6.605).

Hopousia

A review of *Hopousia; or, The Sexual and Economic Foundations of a New Society*, by J. D. Unwin. Introduction by Aldous Huxley

London: Allen & Unwin, 1940. Pp. 475.

Purpose, 7 (July/Dec 1940) 154-58

It must be affirmed, first, that the death of J. D. Unwin in 1936 – indirectly as the result of wounds received in the last war – was the most serious loss to English anthropology that could have happened; second, that his chief work, *Sex and Culture*, has an importance for sociologists and for theologians which has yet to be fully recognised.[1] After that, we can explain that *Hopousia* (as the sub-title should indicate) is a work of most ambitious scope – this is a volume of 475 pages – which Unwin left unfinished.[2] In the state in which he left it – the book is unformed, ill-proportioned, and somewhat miscellaneous – it might, indeed, had the author lived to finish it, have become several volumes, or divided itself into several distinct works. It cannot, therefore, be reviewed in the ordinary way; there are several parts of it which ought to be reviewed by different reviewers. Part of the book is concerned, as we should expect, with developing the inferences from his observations on sexual continence and social energy; a large part, perhaps the most fully written part, is occupied with monetary principles and fallacies; a good deal is hardly more than notes – though very interesting notes – on society and contemporary social ideas; and there is a section, the necessity of which in this work is not obvious, on modern astronomical theory about the place of our world in the cosmos. It is impossible to discuss Unwin's views on all these subjects in one article. Book II (143-298) ought to be reviewed by an economist. I need only say of this part, that Unwin is on the right side; and that the importance of his economic opinions does not reside primarily in any rectifications of, or additions to, the theories of other economic reformers of whose writings the readers of *Purpose* may be presumed to be aware, but in the fact that he came to them independently from his study of sociology and not as an economist.

About the title of the book, we are told by the editor, Unwin had not settled his mind; and we may wonder whether in his final version he would not have dropped the very slight fiction for which it stands.[3] Hopousia ("Whereland") is the name of an imaginary country with a self-contained and completely rational economy. But of the pictorial appeal which gives the point to this kind of invention there is very little: for the most part, Unwin's method is a straightforward exposition of the rearrangements we ought to make in the internal order of any civilised society if we wish to develop, and to maintain indefinitely, the highest possible degree of social energy. (The limitation is only that the problems involved in the relations of this perfected society to other societies or nations, whether the latter are Hopousian or not, are deliberately ignored.) As to the forms in which this energy should manifest itself, the author is solicitous not to dogmatise; such a society might be organised for war, or for the arts. But it is impossible to extrude moral dispositions altogether; and Unwin's are obviously those of the most civilised Briton, without any particular religious bias. His society will develop and combine the spirit of community and respect for the individual; he is averse to any form of State despotism; he attaches great importance to the maintenance of aristocracy; and he urges as much decentralisation as possible.

As the background of this book is the theory of sex and social energy expounded in *Sex and Culture* – a theory which for the benefit of those who have not read that work, is recapitulated – the most interesting point that I can choose to discuss here is probably his application of that theory to his ideal society. The theory itself is associated with the classification of societies, in their scale of culture, as zoistic, manistic, deistic and rationalistic. It is according to the extent of restrictions upon sexual intercourse that Unwin finds that societies accumulate the reserve energy which finds expression in war and territorial expansion, and on a higher level in the higher religions and philosophy and the development of the arts and of manners. Sexual promiscuity leaves very little energy over; monogamy – involving at least pre-nuptial chastity of the mothers of the next generation – releases the most. The beneficial results of continence are due to appear in the third generation. Now Unwin is quite well aware that such an ideal is unattainable – especially as he does not employ any religious sanctions as prohibitions, and does not countenance any sense of sin. Furthermore, he appears to have been of a liberal mind which shrank from imposing restraint upon sexual impulses. He therefore hit upon an ingenious compromise, which we may or may not find adequate. His Hopousians will have two forms of marriage, *alpha* and *beta*. Alpha marriage is to provide the social energy. "It demands," he says, "pre-nuptial chastity and, as long as each partner is capable of attending to the other partner's needs, allows no divorce. Beta marriage can be terminated by mutual consent, and demands no pre-nuptial chastity. No shame attaches to beta marriage; the individual is free to choose whichever form of marriage suits his temperament and outlook. At the same time adultery cannot be condoned, not for any moral reason but because it strikes at the root of social energy" [348].

The future of the nation or race, it seems, is in the hands of the alpha parents. As an inducement, their children will have ten votes, whereas the beta children will only have one apiece. From alpha unions, moreover, springs the aristocracy; there will always be an aristocracy, though it is to be expected that some alphas will contract beta marriages, so that their children will sink in the social scale, and that some betas will contract alpha marriages, and their children will join the aristocracy. This interchange is, of course, a kind of rationalisation of what actually happens in any persisting aristocracy: a certain proportion of social sinking and rising is always going on. But – human nature being what it is – one may doubt whether Unwin's rewards for alpha marriages are tempting enough to induce people to practise the self-denial required. Mr. Aldous Huxley, in a long and characteristic introduction, is optimistic on this point; but he does not convince me that the alpha class may not largely consist of the sexually weak, rather than the self-controlled; and his optimism seems to me to derive from a misunderstanding of what will happen.[4] The essential reward, if I have understood Unwin rightly, is having superior posterity, and that not sooner than the third generation. People will, of course, make the most severe sacrifices for the sake of real or illusory advantages for their children; but how many are capable of such sacrifice for the sake of a generation which they may not live to see? Mr. Huxley appears to think that people who are ambitious, who covet any kind of success in the world, who wish to be politicians, scientists, or artists, will choose alpha wedlock. Such an expectation is hardly justified by the lives of some of the most distinguished politicians, scientists and artists in the past; nor is it self-evident that the politicians, scientists and artists who have been guilty of notorious incontinence would have been better at their jobs had they preserved their chastity. I doubt whether the ambition to be the grandparent of an illustrious man – an uncertain consequence of life-long fidelity – is a powerful enough motive. Some religious, patriotic, or humanitarian passion must supplement it, if not what Dr. Johnson (I believe) regarded as the chief incentive to virtue – the fear of hell.[5]

I have chosen this particular item in Unwin's vast programme because it seems to me to indicate a fundamental confusion of the descriptive and the normative. Can sociology be more than a descriptive science? Can it tell us, with any cogency, what to do, unless it can provide also a powerful motive for doing it? If the author had confined himself to showing what must be done *if* we desire certain results, he would not have confused the science of sociology with the art of politics. But on the other hand, we must not allow his amateur politics to blind us to the great importance of his purely sociological reasoning and conclusions. All apart from the important parts of this book which I do not feel competent to review, there are many other things in it, products of a fertile, lively and highly intelligent mind, which I might be tempted to comment on separately. One ought to read *Sex and Culture*, which is Unwin's masterpiece; but in *Hopousia* you will find many more good things than I have given any hint of: it is a vast notebook, every page of which is a reminder of an intellect that would have been of incalculable value in the struggle with Britain's problems of the present and the future.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. J. D. Unwin (1895-1936), Cambridge anthropologist and director of the Cambridge House, a social settlement in Southwark. Wounded twice in World War I and awarded the Military Cross, he died at age forty following surgery. Unwin's *Sex and Culture* (London: Oxford UP, 1934) argued, controversially, that cultural achievement ("social energy") was empirically correlated with restrictive sexual mores.

2. After Desmond Hawkins asked TSE to review *Hopousia*, TSE wrote him on 6 May 1940: "I am interested in what you say about Unwin's book, and look forward to reading it. The book has not yet arrived, but I think I warned you that I should not have time even to begin reading it until the middle of June, though of course if I were prevented from going to Italy I should want to start it at once." The Italian trip was canceled, and TSE sent the review to Hawkins on 24 July. It appeared as the last item in the final number of *Purpose*. On learning that the magazine was to cease publication, TSE told Hawkins on 28 May that he was "grieved, though not surprised."

At his own suggestion, Hawkins had reviewed Unwin's *Sexual Regulations and Human Behavior* (1933) in the *Criterion* of Oct 1934 (133-35). His interest piqued, TSE invited Kenneth de Burgh Codrington on 7 Sept 1934 to review *Sex and Culture*; Codrington's review appeared in the *Criterion* of July 1935 (663-67). Like Hawkins, Codrington was enthusiastic. Writing to Hawkins on 22 Nov 1935, TSE praised Unwin's "Mulungu and the Anthropologists," a critique of anthropological approaches to primitive religion, which Hawkins had published in the Oct/Dec 1935 issue of *Purpose* (165-76). TSE followed up on 26 Feb 1936 by inviting Unwin to dinner, describing himself as "much interested by your work." There is no record of their meeting, however, and Unwin died in June.

3. A short preface by Y. J. Lubbrock explains that "J. D. Unwin himself was not altogether pleased with the title *Hopousia*, which is derived from the Greek word meaning 'where.' Had he lived it is probable that he would have found another title, but as no obvious one suggested itself, the original one has been retained" (8).

4. Huxley's introduction suggests that Unwin's scheme of alpha and beta marriage "is probably sound" because "it merely systematizes and gives social sanction to a process which, unofficially, is going on in all societies dominated by an energetic ruling class." Huxley predicts that "in every generation, enough people would select the alpha way of life to allow their society to go on displaying energy indefinitely" (17-18).

5. In *The Rambler* (no. 78), Johnson wrote: "The great incentive to virtue is the reflection that we must die; it will therefore be useful to accustom ourselves, whenever we see a funeral, to consider how soon we may be added to the number of those whose probation is past, and whose happiness or misery shall endure for ever." Johnson's "incentive" thus encompasses the possibilities of both salvation and damnation, though TSE's memory of the passage has narrowed it to the latter.

An Issue of *The Christian News-Letter*

The Christian News-Letter, 42 (14 Aug 1940) [1-4]

Dear Member,

You were warned by Dr. Oldham that *The Christian News-Letter* would for the next three weeks appear over my name as *locum tenens* while he takes a brief midsummer holiday.[1] The news can hardly be more unwelcome to you than the invitation was to myself. But for the sake of the work which lies ahead of him, it was obviously important that the Editor should have a vacation now; the alternative of suspending publication for three weeks seemed undesirable from several points of view; and I appeared to be the only person available, already associated with his work on the *News-Letter*, who could give the time to filling in the interval. With no previous experience in editing a weekly periodical, I can only hope at best to begin to learn how to do it by the end of the three weeks' ordeal. But the labour and thought and energy which the Editor has had to devote to his task would have been immense, even if he had started with a going concern and in normal circumstances; and when we consider the much heavier burdens involved in creating and organising such an enterprise in most difficult times, I think you will agree that some temporary substitute was called for.

"A POSITIVE SOCIAL FAITH"

I should like to begin by reverting to this phrase which was the title of a section of Letter No. 40. The Editor mentioned two remarkable leading articles in *The Times*, from one of which he quoted that "much harm has been done to our cause, both in Europe and overseas, by the insinuation that we stand for the old order, and that our only aim is to restore the *status quo* in Europe and to maintain it at home," and from the other, "the new order cannot be based on the preservation of privilege, whether the privilege of a country, of a class, or of an individual."[2] I was reminded of these words by reading a leading article in the *Evening Standard* of August 2nd, advocating the rapid advancement of younger men, and saying: "It is a young idea which Europe needs to-day. We are not fighting to restore the old formulas to which old men cling. We are fighting for a new world which only young men can descry."[3] And *The Times* leaders quoted have been followed by another in the same spirit, in the issue of August 5th.[4]

Such sentiments are admirable, but we cannot afford to go on repeating them too often without anything to show for it. When phrases cease to arouse any hope of action, they go dead: and when phrases die, they can become not merely useless, but poisonous. The "new world" so eagerly desired is not to be arrived at merely by a programme to be elaborated, discussed, altered, and carried out by a committee; it is arrived at by seeing the true values in situations as they arise. The organisation of industry and of finance, of agriculture, of education, must all, under pressure of hard circumstance, be radically modified: the sum and interaction of intelligent adaptations, if animated by a common spirit of patriotism, prudence and adventure, is what will create the civilisation of the future. The necessity makes the opportunity; and it is our business, as Dr. Loewe pointed out in his important Supplement (*C.N.-L.* No. 29), not to think of "the new world" as something to be deferred until after the war, but to conduct the war in such a way as to prepare it – for the very changes we ought to make in order to win the war can help to prepare the "new world" after it.[5]

The number of people who aim directly at social change and improvement is no doubt small; but the number of people who are willing to accept quite radical change whenever and wherever the situation seems to call for it is now I believe very large. The adaptations which we have already had to make have made us more adaptable; the sacrifices we have made (trifling, so far, for some, cruel for others) render us more stoical for further sacrifice. We believe that the Government could call upon us to endure the most severe hardships, but only on two conditions.

The first condition is that no pretext, however unjustified, should be given to us for believing that there are powerful forces in society which would, if faced with the alternative, prefer to lose the war or to patch up a peace rather than accept social changes. What I have in view is not ordinary "defeatism"; it does not imply in the narrower sense, corruption or improbity; it comprehends a large measure of honest, dull, unimaginative assumption that things contingent are things vital. It is not the state of mind of tin-horn Catilines or that of lethargic latifundians, but of ordinary decent Christians whose Christianity has begun to putrify inside them – but it could be more dangerous than the most melodramatic Fifth Column.[6] The other condition is that no genuine grievance of social injustice should be left unredressed, and no imaginary grievance be left unrefuted. It is not hardship that people find intolerable, but feeling that they are being treated unfairly; and a small grievance may be as dangerous as a great one. For instance, if a small tradesman suspects that while his own business is hampered by the paucity of his petrol ration, some "voluntary worker" of the value of whose work he is not convinced is getting plenty of petrol for a private car, this particular grievance can breed in him a general discontent. If this injustice is allowed, he argues unconsciously to himself, I am probably being bamboozled in other ways of which I am unaware. So distrust is born.

PAYING FOR THE WAR

I touch upon the question of the recent Supplementary Budget (which, I know, had been on the Editor's mind) not to make criticism for which I have no special qualifications, but because it represents one of those subjects upon which the ordinary thoughtful man wants to be reassured.[7] We are all gratified to have a National Government, and to be convinced that in some departments it has brought a new initiative and enterprise; but we should like to be sure that it will bring also a truly National Finance. The new spirit in the Government shows no appearance of having reached the Treasury. That every individual and every corporation should contribute to national investment to the utmost of their ability seems obvious. But how, we want to know, is the gap between the maximum voluntary contributions, plus taxation, and essential national expenditure to be met?[8] I have a pamphlet of the Economic Reform Club and Institute (an organisation of which I have no other knowledge: its address is 26, Grosvenor Place, London, S.W. 1) called "The Banks and the War" – a paper of correspondence with the Treasury.[9] The Club wanted to know why the nation should pay interest (which is of course payable until the capital is repaid) to the Banks for money created to help finance the war.[10] In this correspondence the Treasury, as might be expected, gave no change. But to me (who am no economist) this question seems not unrelated to that raised by the Archbishop of York in our Supplement of last week, relative to the "Law of Jubilee."[11]

THE CONDITIONS OF STATESMANSHIP

Such doubts need not, of course, start from Christian belief or lead to Christian conclusions. But I believe that what people want from their statesmen, whether they know it or not, is not merely energy, efficiency and ability, but a right sense of values; they do not want the values of a class to which they do not themselves belong, or even merely those of the class to which they do belong, but of the nation as a whole. These should not be values imposed by the power of a personality or the doctrines of a "party," but elicited by a kind of representative character: and should have reference not necessarily to what people think they want, but to what they really want and what they can recognise that they ought to want – to people not always just as they are, but as they would like to be. The late King George V came to have some of this representative character: so that the humblest individual could imagine himself almost as in the same position – but not doing the job so well. Mr. Churchill has gained something of this authority; and it is possible that a similar popularity attends the Minister who most resembles Mr. Churchill in broadcast manner and speech – Mr. Bevin.[12] Incidentally, these men know how to speak English which is pure but not pasteurized. But I am not concerned with popularity, but with what lies behind popularity when the popularity is justified: a sense of what can appeal to the best in every Briton, by making him see himself as a member of a great community. So far as Lord Halifax's broadcast failed to receive the assent which it deserved, I believe that it was because the non-church-goer, and the infrequent church-goer, thought of it as directed to somebody else – to "the man in the pew."[13] But on the other hand, I do not believe that any statesman to-day in this country could command popular success, whose mind and feelings were wholly detached from that obscure basis of Christian thought and emotion which is still integral with the people's ideals.

PORTUGAL

In recent weeks there have been frequent references in the Press to Portugal, first in connection with the Colonial Exhibition held in Lisbon to celebrate the anniversary of the nation's independence, and second in connection with our own Mediterranean problems.[14] Much of this matter has been repetitive, but at least, the name and eminence of Dr. Salazar, the Prime Minister for the last twelve years, is not well known to the British public.[15] Dr. Salazar – whose chief, as President, is General Carmona[16] – has never encouraged the adoption of the "Leader Principle," and no leader has ever won his position with less personal ambition, or less appeal to mass emotion. Nor did he rise to power through a "party." He simply happens to be the ablest statesman in Portugal, all the more distinguished by never appearing in a uniform or wearing a decoration.[17] He looks what he is by profession, a university professor: but a very brief meeting with him gave me the impression of a university professor who is also an extremely acute judge of men.[18] His interest and importance for us is that without being in any dubious political sense pro-clerical he is a Christian at the head of a Christian country.[19]

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

I was glad to read a week or two ago in *The Listener* a paragraph about the successful evacuation of Alderney; and a most interesting account from an eye-witness, giving a much more sombre account of the last days in Jersey, occupies a large place in a recent issue of the *King-Hall News-Letter*.[20] For, though we now have no news from the Channel Islands, the very absence of news should make us think more constantly of those, English and Anglo-Norman, who remain under the German power which is now exercised over British soil, the oldest fief of the Crown.[21] The Bishop of Winchester at his Diocesan Conference reported that practically all the clergy remained with their people;[22] and the following is a quotation from one of our members, the son of a minister who stayed in Jersey:

> When it became clear that more than half of the population could not get away from the Island, the Bailiff and all the Jurats put out a public notice to the effect that they were all remaining to stand by the people, and all the Free Church ministers sent a similar statement to the press. Evacuation by air continued after the staff of the airport had left, and a Methodist minister took charge of the office, and organised the despatch of the planes. We are all proud that our parents remained to carry on their work.[23]

The people of the Islands ought to be constantly remembered in our prayers, and periodically at public worship in every church in the Empire.

THE *C.N.-L.* AND H.M. FORCES

We have now received nearly £200 in excess of the £500 for which we appealed to cover the cost of extra postage. Our most grateful thanks are due to all who have so kindly helped us.

We should like the *News-Letter* to be more widely known to the men and women in the three Services, and opportunities have presented themselves of supplying copies to a number of centres in ways that would secure their receiving attention and being read. We propose to use the surplus of the fund to which you generously contributed as the nucleus of a fund for this purpose. We believe that you will welcome this use of your donations. Some of you may wish personally to assist a project, the possibilities of which extend far beyond our present resources.

POSTSCRIPT

If I disturbed the Editor's holiday by consulting him about my subject-matter and my opinions, there would be no point in my replacing him for these three weeks. He will know nothing of these three issues until they appear. If, therefore, you have any complaints or criticisms, I hope that you will address them to me personally, so that I may benefit from them, and so that you may keep in mind that it is not the Editor to whom these criticisms should be directed.[24]

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *locum tenens*: placeholder. The text of this entire issue was written by TSE as guest editor. In the *CN-L* of 7 Aug 1940, Oldham wrote: "In order that I may get some holiday, my friend Mr. T. S. Eliot has agreed with characteristic generosity to be responsible for the next three issues of the *News-Letter*. These will appear over his name. He has been one of a small group who, since the *News-Letter* was started, have met weekly to advise about each number. I could not have got on at all without them. Mr. Eliot is thus thoroughly familiar with the past of the *News-Letter* and its general plan" (4).

2. "Hitler's Europe," *The Times* (18 July 1940), 5; and "The New Europe," *The Times* (1 July 1940), 5. Oldham quotes these articles in the *CN-L* of 31 July 1940. TSE has reproduced Oldham's minor misquotations; *read:* "much harm may be done"; "in Europe and oversea"; "whether the privilege be that of a country."

3. "Young Men," *The Evening Standard* (2 Aug 1940), 4.

4. "Planning for War and Peace," *The Times* (5 Aug 1940), 5.

5. In the Supplement to the *CN-L* of 15 May 1940, Loewe argues in "Social Transformation and the War" that "There can be no revival of European culture unless we accept and carry out the principles of social justice at home" [3]. He therefore urges "not schemes for the future, but *action* in the present," and specifically mentions reform in the distribution of wealth, in education, and in international federalism [3-4].

Adolf Löwe or Loewe (1893-1995), who adopted the Anglicized spelling "Adolph Lowe," was a German-born economist and sociologist at the University of Frankfurt and sometime adviser to the Weimar government. Like Karl Mannheim, he was blacklisted by Hitler as a "dangerous intellectual" in 1933, lost his university position, and fled with his family to England, where he taught at the London School of Economics and the University of Manchester. With TSE, he was a regular participant in the Moot during its first two years. In 1941, frustrated that the British government would not allow German émigrés to contribute to the war effort, he accepted a position at the New School for Social Research in New York, where he taught for almost forty years.

6. Catiline (108-62 BC), populist Roman politician and revolutionary. Latifundians: holders of large agricultural estates worked by slaves or serfs.

7. With the budget passed in April already proving inadequate to finance the British war effort, the government proposed a supplemental budget on 23 July.

8. The supplemental budget included "new taxation proposals" but retained "a gap of more than £2 billion between revenue and estimated expenditure in the current year" – a matter of some concern in Parliament. See, for example, "Paying for the War," *Times* (5 Aug 1940), 4.

9. Founded in 1936, the Economic Reform Club and Institute advocated agrarianism and monetary reform. It attained its peak membership of approximately 2,000 during the war. The pamphlet that TSE describes was the first in a series of five published between 1940 and 1944. Its full title, as given on its cover, is *The Banks and the War: Being a Record of Correspondence between the Economic Reform Club and the Treasury, Followed by Extracts from the Official Report of Parliamentary Debates in the House of Commons*.

10. The pamphlet includes a memorandum in which the Club argues "that it is, or should be, the prerogative of the State to create such additional money as may be required for national purposes. No justification is seen for the policy adopted by the Government during the last War, of borrowing from private institutions the additional money, including credit and bank money, required for national purposes and paying interest thereon" (4). This is followed by three exchanges in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, through an assistant, dismisses the Club's proposals and declines to meet with its proffered deputation.

11. In "Begin Now," the supplement to the *CN-L* of 7 Aug 1940, William Temple, Archbishop of York, offers several proposals for economic reform, including the idea that "*The principle of the Mosaic Law of Jubilee should be applied*":

> It is perfectly ludicrous that because someone lent money for the building of (say) the Great Western Railway, he should become possessed of a saleable right to levy a private tax upon that railway for ever, and that this should pass from hand to hand by process of inheritance or sale as if it were a commodity. Shares should either be "debentures" and repayable at a certain date, or should, after bearing interest for a period of (say) fifty years lose x per cent. of their capital value every year until they are extinguished. [2]

The Jubilee, commanded in Leviticus 25:8-55 and 27:17-24, is the culmination of a forty-nine- or fifty-year cycle (the length is disputed). It requires the manumission of all Israelite indentured servants, cessation of agricultural labor, and – most pertinent for Temple's article – the return of all real property to its original owners.

12. Ernest Bevin (1881-1951), British Labour politician and trade unionist. As general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, he had taken a strong stance in the 1930s against fascism, pacifism, and appeasement. In May 1940, Bevin joined the Churchill government as minister for Labour and National Service. Like Churchill, he had a reputation for effective oratory.

13. Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, Viscount Halifax (1881-1959), British Conservative politician, was Foreign Secretary. His broadcast of 22 July, titled "Great Britain Shall Go

Forward," was the government's response to a suggestion from Hitler (in a 19 July speech to the Reichstag, after the fall of France) that the British withdraw from the war and discuss peace terms with Germany. After expressions of defiance, Halifax, a pious Anglo-Catholic, framed the British cause as a "crusade for Christianity," urged his listeners to prayer, and assured the people that their faithful efforts "will become [God's] work, and we can safely leave the issue in His hands."

14. Portugal celebrated its 800th anniversary on 4 June 1940. Associated events included the Exhibition of the Portuguese World, which opened on 16 June. Britain's "Mediterranean problems" included the beginnings of the North African Campaign and the naval Battle of the Mediterranean, the defense of Gibraltar, and the siege of Malta.

15. António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), prime minister of Portugal (1932-68). The authoritarian leader of the Estado Novo, he followed right-wing corporatist policies and maintained an official neutrality during the war, though ultimately offering some support to the Allies in keeping with the six-hundred-year-old Anglo-Portuguese Alliance. Importantly for TSE, Salazar was strongly pro-Catholic and embraced Catholic social teaching.

16. Although Óscar Carmona (1869-1951), president from 1926 until his death, was nominally the head of state, he was in fact subordinate to Salazar and had been so since the early 1930s. Carmona had appointed Salazar finance minister in 1928 and elevated him to prime minister in 1932.

17. TSE's impressions are based primarily on *Salazar: Portugal and her Leader*, by António Ferro, the regime's leading propagandist. The book, which takes the form of a series of conversations between Ferro and Salazar, was published by Faber in 1939 with a subvention from the Portuguese government. It included a preface by Sir Austen Chamberlain, an introduction (in the form of a long additional interview) by Ferro, and a foreword by Salazar himself. Chamberlain's preface, which is dated 19 June 1935, is followed by a publisher's note probably written by TSE:

> Although the translation of this book was delayed, for reasons beyond the control of either author or publisher, we have left the preface of Sir Austen Chamberlain in the place for which it was originally intended. The new introduction which Senhor Ferro has added, just before publication, to bring the work up to date, appears on page 13. In this introduction the reader will find the reply of Dr. Salazar to several criticisms made by Sir Austen Chamberlain.
>
> It is to be observed that Senhor Ferro, when he wrote this book for the Portuguese public, was speaking only as a journalist interviewing the leader of the Government. In contributing a new introduction, he speaks as the head of a Government department.

Ferro had in fact been director of the Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional since the department's inception in 1933 and is even credited with having suggested to Salazar the need for such an agency.

TSE's negotiations over *Salazar* led to Faber's publication, also in 1939, of *Doctrine and Action: Internal and Foreign Policy of the New Portugal, 1928-1939*, a collection of Salazar's speeches in English translation.

18. Salazar held a doctoral degree in financial law and taught at the University of Coimbra Law School before entering government. TSE's editorial supervision of the two Salazar volumes led to an invitation to serve on the jury of the prestigious Camões Prize during a state-subsidized

three-week visit to Portugal in May 1938. Thanking Ferro on 27 May for his hospitality and that of his government, TSE recalled “the great beauty of your country, the charm of its people, and the strength of an enlightened and far-seeing Government.” He added that his “impressions of respect and admiration for Dr. Salazar, formed by reading, were confirmed by having the privilege of meeting him.”

19. British admiration of Salazar at this time extended beyond TSE. An article in the *Times* of 3 June 1940 lavished praise on Salazar for reducing the country’s debt and for “the rebuilding of the State on a Christian plan” (5), and an editorial the following day predicted that future historians would consider the Salazar era to be “one of the heroic periods of Portuguese history” (7).

20. “The Spirit of Alderney,” *The Listener*, 24 (1 Aug 1940), reports the narrative of Sir Henry Gauvain, a “distinguished physician whose family has been associated with the island for several hundred years” (155). “Exodus from Jersey,” *K-H Newsletter*, 212 (2 Aug 1940), Supplement [2-4], by an unidentified female resident, includes an account of strafing and bombing by the Luftwaffe – resulting in a number of civilian casualties – shortly before the evacuation.

21. After the fall of France, the British government elected not to defend the Channel Islands but to offer their residents the option of evacuation. The Wehrmacht bombed the harbors on 28 June 1940 and then occupied the islands. Bypassed by the D-Day invasion of the continent, the islands remained under German control until the end of the war in Europe.

22. The Bishop of Winchester was Cyril Garbett (1875-1955).

23. Author unidentified in *CN-L* correspondence.

24. His discussion of war finance brought TSE a letter of concern from an expert in that field, the banker and former civil servant Robert H. Brand, to whom he responded apologetically on 13 Sept 1940: “I must explain that I knew nothing about the Economic Reform Club until I saw their pamphlet and the only one of the principals in it whom I know personally is Lord Lymington. I, certainly, after having had eight years in the City myself . . . am not disposed to go witch-hunting after bankers.”

An Issue of *The Christian News-Letter*[1]

The Christian News-Letter, 43 (21 Aug 1940) [1-4]

Dear Member,

One of the perennial problems of Christian thought is that of the different, and often conflicting claims of liberty and order; sometimes between liberty and social justice. The difficulties of the problem are never more acute and perplexing than at a time like the present. When a nation is engaged in a vital struggle which revives the sense of community, social injustice is more patent and more intolerable, and demands control of the actions of some in the interests of all. At the same time our jealousy for our liberties, our fear of falling into the same servitude as that imposed by the régime against which we fight, becomes more sensitive. It is never easy to determine what are essential liberties, what are relative, and what are merely licence and indulgence: circumstances will alter our classifications. The fear of anarchy, or the fear of tyranny, may drive us to extremes in turn. A case in point is the outcry against the use of investigators (the so-called "snoopers") by the Ministry of Information – a form of enquiry which, in any case, does not appear to have been introduced by the present Minister.[2] Whether the methods are right, and the results useful, ought to be the subject of dispassionate examination. I have not seen either the methods or the purpose seriously criticised; but the Ministry has been the object of a clamour which would give the impression that it was endeavouring to set up a Secret Police.

The insistence of the problem of freedom led me to give close attention to Sir Norman Angell's recent Penguin pamphlet, *Why Freedom Matters*.[3] To deal with the subject in 134 pages, Sir Norman wisely limits the terms of reference. He restricts himself to the "fundamental and supreme freedom" – that is,

> "the freedom to know," freedom of thought, of opinion, of discussion; free access to the raw materials of thought and discussion, to knowledge, particularly to knowledge of the facts relative to policies pursued by governments; freedom to know what our rulers are doing with our lives; freedom to discuss the facts in speech and print; the freedom described

> by Milton as "the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely, according to conscience, which is above all liberties."[4] [30-31]

Such sentiments are unexceptionable: but they are not easy to apply. The universal accessibility of knowledge (by which the author appears to mean information) takes for granted a public, not necessarily of saints, but at least of Sir Norman Angells, who have highly trained minds. Knowledge requires a knower, as well as facts to be known: the question of the supply of knowers implies the whole problem of education. The problem of "freedom of thought" is related to the problem of how to provide people who can think freely – and wisely. That is an educational problem: but the first problem of education is that of what rights should be conceded to, and what duties imposed upon parents; and this is also the first problem of freedom.

This is not to say that I do not agree with the general tenor of Sir Norman Angell's argument in favour of free speech. But a Christian argument would have to take into account a great deal that Sir Norman does not treat; such as the problems of education and parental rights and responsibilities, just mentioned. And if it did not go so far as that, it would confine itself to particular liberties, and content itself with saying: here and here liberty is being infringed, let us defend it.

THE DISMISSAL OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Let us consider a particular problem of freedom and order. In our Letter No. 41 the Editor commented upon the action of the City Council of York in terminating the engagement of all City employees who have declared themselves to be conscientious objectors.[5] We should add that a strong letter of protest against this action appeared in the *Yorkshire Evening Press* of August 2 over the signatures of eleven Free Church ministers of that city.[6] Such a statement is very welcome.

Nevertheless, there is one possible source of ill-feeling against conscientious objectors, which ought to be discussed freely, in order that it may not gain volume in subterranean channels. To several of our correspondents it appears unjust that able-bodied objectors of military age should remain in their peace-time employment, under the same conditions and enjoying the same income, while their contemporaries are being enlisted into new and often uncongenial services at meagre rates of pay and at risk of life. Such an inequality will no doubt be a greater grievance to the families of the men in the services than to the men themselves: the womenfolk may have bitter daily reminder of the difference in their situation and that of their children, from that of the families of the conscientious objectors. Such considerations may have influenced the members of the York City Council, and led them, in the attempt to remove one injustice, to commit another.

As for the financial inequality, it might be possible to remedy that by continuing the objectors in their posts at a reduced wage for the period of the war, making allowance for any higher scale of living, than that of a private soldier, which their several employments imposed: this again would only be fair if the difference in their salaries were not retained by their employers (whether private or public corporations), but allocated to some public cause.[7] As for conscientious objectors over military age, I take it that their opinions, so far as they keep them to themselves, and cannot be found guilty of trying to excite disaffection, are their own business. As for those of military age, who have been exempted by a tribunal, and unless they are such persons and in such positions that they are likely to do harm, there is nothing whatever to be said for dismissing them. On a lower level than that of pure justice, it may be deprecated as doing harm to our national reputation for tolerance and generosity; on a lower level still, at a time of extreme national effort, it is nonsensical to eject men from jobs where they are useful, and cast them out for public assistance or starvation.

It is well also if we can see the problem of justice as between conscientious objectors and those who accept the obligation of military service, in a larger context of social justice. "To each according to his need," *The Times* has recently reminded us, is an old motto;[8] and the larger question (especially insistent in a time of national emergency) is how far inequalities of income should be allowed, except so far as they represent inequalities of need and inequalities of service to the cause of the nation and of humanity. There is at least one kind of injustice which should, I think, be agreed about by all members of the community whatever their other convictions, and that would be the injustice of anyone's being allowed to accumulate a fortune out of business arising directly from the war.

THE TRIBUNALS

The tribunals have a very difficult task, and however precisely the law was defined, the important qualifications for those who sit upon them would still be sympathy and understanding, the ability to respect sincerity as well as the ability to unmask fraud.[9] Laxity is to be deprecated, but the influence of public opinion should be exercised to restrain justices from harassing the inarticulate applicant, from preaching sermons, or from exhibiting temper. A judge at one tribunal said to an objector: "The room will be the pleasanter for your leaving." We have more sympathy for a worried judge in another city, who complained that the applicants "go off into a series of mental processes" – a form of seizure perhaps unknown on that bench. When the applicant is a Christian, he and the bench should, and often do, receive the assistance and counsel of his clergyman or minister.

THE INTERNEES

While the universal protest against the scandals connected with internment, and the Government's immediate response to public opinion, are gratifying symptoms, we cannot allow the whole problem of internment and deportation to be considered as one which has been settled once for all.[10] We must remember that harm has been done which will take time to right, and some grievous harm that can never be put right. It is not merely a question of releasing those whom the nation could use, but all those, useful or not, who are not the nation's enemies; and not merely a question of releasing them, but of releasing them for something better than starvation.[11] An understanding of their position is not yet universal. A letter which we have from a correspondent who had been interned and released is very temperate and reasonable in tone, and does not complain of ill-treatment, but suggests that some of the officers in the camp laboured under elementary misconceptions, implying a still deeper misunderstanding of the nature of this war. One of them remarked: "I did not know that so many Jews were Nazis!" And others also seemed to think that the prisoners were all supporters – or at least loyal to – the present German régime.

THE DECLINE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

I should like to call attention to a very careful and precise *Statistical Study of Free Church Provision and Membership in England and Wales to 1938*, by Mr. Arthur Black (obtainable from him at 14, Castello Avenue, London, S.W. 15, price 3d. post free).[12] The analysis deals only with the four Free Churches (Methodist, Baptist, English Presbyterian and Congregational), but it should be of equal interest to Anglicans and Roman Catholics. What emerges conspicuously is the decline in Church membership and attendance during this century and especially since 1921; and while the author is willing to attribute some of the loss to secessions to the Churches of

England and Rome, there is no reason to suppose that the membership of the former has increased at all, or that there has been any appreciable increase in the membership of the latter except by immigration from Ireland. (It would be interesting to know the effect on Irish Catholics, in the second and third generations, of residence in England.) The author gives the basis of his figures very clearly. In the London area, for example (25-mile radius from Charing Cross), he records between 1921 and 1938 a decrease of 3 per cent. in Church membership and of 30 per cent. in Sunday School scholars [8]. The figures for provincial towns, small towns and rural districts are no more encouraging. As with the Church of England, certain urban districts are over-supplied with churches, while many new housing estates are almost destitute. Even the decrease of the birth-rate (of which the author takes full account) does not explain the extreme decline in the number of children under instruction. I quote the following paragraph, in which the writer's feeling expresses itself by statement of fact:

> An example from the suburban district of my home gives me some understanding of what exists in many another, making some of our hymns, e.g., "Like a mighty army moves the Church of God," seem rather farcical. In a circle of half a mile radius of the railway station I have visited 13 Sunday Services, two Church of England, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed Church of England, Brethren, Christadelphian, Christian Science, Christ's Church of the Spirit, and London City Mission. There is good feeling between several denominations, and occasional temporary co-operation. But each independently of the rest emphasises its own distinctive witness and uses its own hymn book. Yet with this too ample choice offered, the district is not drawn to public worship. Sunday attendances on the whole are discouraging and the Free Churches here, as elsewhere, mourn declining numbers. [18]

THE REALITY OF A MIXED SOCIETY

In a small book published a year ago, I attempted a sketch of a "Christian Society" in what I believed to be the only sense in which the whole of society in any country could ever be "Christian."[13] My outline did not on the one hand depict an ideal Christian society, nor on the other was it put forward as a scheme for the direct reorganisation of the society which we have. In our Supplement this week Professor Hodges (who previously contributed the

Supplement to No. 27) concerns himself with a different and more immediate and more complex approach to the problem of the relation of the Church and the World.[14] In a world in which Christians must cooperate, not only with each other and with the believers in other religious faiths, but with those who make no religious profession whatever, if any tolerable social order is to be established at all, what common principles of behaviour can be affirmed? This leads to the problem of "natural law" – a problem which presents greater difficulties for the modern world than it did for the Middle Ages. But it is no merely abstract theological and philosophical discussion that Professor Hodges has introduced, but one of the most vital importance for directing Christian social action.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The text of this entire issue was written by TSE as guest editor (see 6.110, n.1).

2. The "present Minister" – third in a rapid succession – was the Conservative politician Alfred Duff Cooper (1890-1954). The ministry's use of door-to-door canvassers to gauge the mood of the public led to an uproar in the press in July 1940; the investigators, soon branded "Cooper's Snoopers," were denounced as spies. Under questioning in the House of Commons, Cooper stated that the canvassers were merely attempting "to ascertain public opinion" in the same way that news media and public-opinion firms did. "There is nothing new about it," he insisted on 31 July, "nor is there anything underhand or in any way connected with spying." These assurances, however, did not end the debate.

3. Angell's book (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1940) begins from the premise that to "grasp the full meaning of that freedom for which we fight is not only important for our war morale, but in order to enable us to suspend without danger of ultimate sacrifice those freedoms which must be suspended in war-time. . . . Understanding of these issues is vital to victory as well as to freedom" (i).

4. In *Areopagitica*, Milton writes: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

5. In the *CN-L* of 7 Aug 1940, Oldham objected strongly to the York decree: "The freedom of the individual to follow truth and obey his conscience belongs to his nature as a being responsible to God. . . . The fact that we dislike or disagree with certain opinions is no ground for persecuting those who hold them" [3]. As he noted, similar measures were being debated and, in some cases, adopted, in numerous municipalities around this time.

6. "York City Council and Conscientious Objectors," *Yorkshire Evening Press* (2 Aug 1940), 4.

7. The Minister for Labour and National Service, Ernest Bevin, had stated in Parliament on 18 July that he was considering such a policy. The question of the remuneration of conscientious objectors arose repeatedly in the House of Commons.

8. In an editorial of 5 Aug titled "Planning for War and Peace," the *Times* opined: "The first step towards the creation of a new European order will be to feed the hungry, to clothe the

naked, and to house the homeless. No frontiers, no national rivalries can be allowed to impede this essential task. The old motto 'To each according to his needs' is the only criterion which can be applied" (5).

9. The 1939 National Service (Armed Forces) Act had instated full conscription but made exception for conscientious objectors. Tribunals were charged with adjudicating the genuineness of claims to conscientious objector status.

10. Thousands of "enemy aliens" had been interned or deported since June, refugees from fascism among them. As TSE notes, questions of justice and of consequent hardship were publicly debated, as was the wastage of human capital.

11. In response to public objections, the government modified its internment policy on 23 July to bring about "the correction of mistakes in the application of the general order, the prompt release of internees suffering from infirmity or ill-health, and the enlargement of the categories of exemption to include particularly those who can 'render services of special value' or make 'a significant contribution' to the war effort" (*The Times*, 24 July 1940, 7). Further exemptions – as for "those who have British-born or naturalized sons serving in the British armed Forces" – were soon added (*The Times*, 1 Aug 1940, 4). There was still no mechanism, however, for the release of internees on the basis of established loyalty, and protests on behalf of "friendly aliens" therefore continued.

12. This self-published pamphlet documents "a reduction in Free Church membership and still greater in that of Sunday Schools from 1906, one of the peak years, until the outbreak of the Great War, and subsequently" (6). It opens with an endorsement by Walter H. Armstrong, president of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches of England and Wales. The pamphlet's statistics and commentary, Armstrong writes, "ought not and must not be ignored. If they are it is at our peril" (3). The author, Arthur Black (1892-1942), served as secretary of the Shaftesbury Society and Ragged School Union, a charitable organization, from 1919 to 1938. He was co-author (with five others) of *Pathways to Christian Unity: A Free Church View* (1919) and author of *Shaftesbury and his Voluntary Services* (1938).

13. *ICS* (5.683).

14. H. A. Hodges, "Social Standards in a Mixed Society," *CN-L*, 43 (21 Aug 1940), Supplement [1-4]. His previous contribution, "What Difference Does Christianity Make?," appeared in the *CN-L* of 1 May 1940. A professor of philosophy at the University of Reading, Hodges (1905-76) was a regular participant in The Moot.

An Issue of *The Christian News-Letter*[1]

The Christian News-Letter, 44 (28 Aug 1940) [1-4]

Dear Member,

There may be many people in this country who have formed the impression that Catholic France has shown itself to be reactionary, defeatist, and anti-British; who believe, in short, that Catholic France is adequately represented by Marshal Pétain.[2] Such opinions should be controverted from the start. I cannot expect that any defence of Catholic and Christian France will be admitted by those who maintain that the English Church, and for the matter of that the Roman Church in Britain and all the other Churches, are dominated by reactionary laymen and still more reactionary clergy. But perhaps those who are aware of the variety of social views held by church people in Britain, will be disposed to credit the existence of some variety in France, a nation amongst whom much greater extremes of political opinion have been wont to flourish, and with a more violent animosity, than is usual here.

FRENCH WORKMEN AND FRENCH INTELLECTUALS

I have no private source of information about recent events in France, and public information is meagre. But the temper of the French people, and their divisions, cannot have changed completely in a few weeks' time;[3] furthermore, the events of this summer have been prepared, as we can see in retrospect, by the events of the last twenty years and more. There has indeed always been an extreme right-wing Catholicism, but also a Catholicism of the people – the latter on the whole democratic and republican in sentiment, but not, of course, Communistic. For the Catholicism of the people, Miss Barbara Ward, in a well-informed article in the August number of *The Christian Democrat* (published by the Catholic Social Guild, Oxford: subscription 3s. per annum), makes a point of great importance: the fact that Catholic allegiance is strongest, not so much among the agricultural peasantry, the heirs of the French Revolution, who, especially in the South-West, tend to a freethinking radicalism tinged with a cynical scepticism, but among the industrial workers [120].[4] The latter, of course, are most thickly settled in the North-East: it is, therefore, the more Catholic part of France which is under the German heel. It is among these industrial groups – extending into Belgium – that such beneficent popular religious organisations as "J.O.C." (the *Jocistes*, or Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique) have taken root. (About the J.O.C. a pamphlet has been published by the S.P.C.K.: *Jocism*, by G. W. O. Addleshaw, 6d.[5]) The intellectual expression of Christianity allied with progressive social views has appeared in the pages of *Esprit* and several other Christian but not clerical periodicals: *Esprit*, at least, was still being published quite recently.[6] Such reviews debated freely matters of Christian sociology, and deserved the attention of all Christian reformers in other countries.

As for the Catholicism of the Right, the term comprehends more variety of tendencies and backgrounds than Miss Ward, in the article cited above, succeeds in making us realise. She speaks of it as having found a vehicle of expression in the *Action Française* (a name which refers both to a political movement and to the daily newspaper by which it has been propagated) [119]. But the chief figure in this group was Charles Maurras: a middleclass, meridional, free-thinking man of letters.[7] As a prose stylist Maurras is unquestionably a master, and deserved his election to the *Académie Française*; as a political thinker he has made, in his time, considerable contributions: but as a stylist he was the disciple of Voltaire, Renan and Anatole France; as a political thinker he was the disciple of the positivist Auguste Comte rather than of Catholics like Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. Maurras – who now, I hear, supports the Pétain *régime* – is a man of powerful but narrow mind, who used to hate Germany, dislike (unless my suspicions were wrong) England; and who, because of his southern Provençal origins, was strongly pro-Italian in the dubious cause of "Latin Mediterranean culture."[8] Like most of his group, he was ill-informed on foreign affairs; and he did not know enough of England to understand either the good or bad of British policy. The one man in his group with some understanding of foreign affairs was Jacques Bainville, a writer of brilliant and lucid mind, whose early death is much to be regretted, but who was, like Maurras, a free-thinker and a product of the post-Revolution bourgeoisie.[9]

The attitude of Maurras towards the Church was simple: he made no pretence of Christian belief, but supported the Church as a social institution making for stability. How many of the hereditary Catholics, of the old families, he was able to attract I do not know. At the time when I was personally acquainted with him and with his entourage, I think that his following was more from the middle and lower middle classes.[10] He waged, it is true, an incessant journalistic battle against political corruption – somewhat indiscriminately and with excessive violence. The more pious of the royalist aristocracy may have hesitated to associate themselves with this outspoken agnostic who made no bones about his lack of faith. He, on the other hand, with honest naïvety, could see no reason why Catholics could not support him if he supported them; and when his movement was condemned, and his newspaper put on the Index, by Pius XI in 1927, I am sure that he was genuinely surprised. (The interdict has since been lifted, on the basis, I believe, of certain assurances given: but he has never attracted back to him such uncompromising Catholics as Jacques Maritain and Georges Bernanos.[11]) In imposing his censure, the Pope was doing more than simply reaffirming the policy of reconciliation with the Republic entered upon by Leo XIII: he was condemning a heresy which asserted that only one form of government, the monarchical, was compatible with Catholicism. Perhaps also condemning a dangerous intolerance which classified Jews, Protestants and Freemasons in one comprehensive condemnation. I defended the *Action Française* when it was put upon the index; my *particular* defence may or may not stand: but I believe now that the Pope understood its tendencies better.[12] There was reason for dissatisfaction with the paper on secular grounds as well: not only its unsatisfactory treatment of foreign affairs, but its lack of appreciation of the importance of economics.

THE DIVERSITY OF FRENCH OPINION

The *Action Française* is a middle-class movement of men of post-Revolution mentality. Until recent times, however, it held itself apart from explicitly Fascist movements such as the *Croix de Feu*.[13] But my reason for writing of it at such length is that the "extreme Right" is a term which includes at least three elements: the aristocratic families which have remained Catholic, and overlapping with them the military families; a certain number of middle-class ideologues, either non-Catholic or neo-Catholic; and finally quite a distinct lot, such financiers and large industrialists as calculate that their bread is buttered on that side. It certainly includes a number of ecclesiastics – but French ecclesiastics differ in their views just as do ordinary men and English ecclesiastics. There are no doubt many Catholics who are quite disinterested and honestly mistaken, who will have leisure to repent later of a sympathy for Italy which has only helped to put their country into the power of Germany: in a time of such political confusion there is every excuse for an honest mistake. But opinion is very diverse, and for this diversity we may call as evidence the great difference between Catholics about the war in Spain. A group of the Right (including several of the hierarchy) issued a manifesto in favour of Franco; the Communists, together with some Liberals, supported a declaration in favour of the Republic; but a group of the most eminent Catholics, including Maritain and François Mauriac (and including, if my memory is not at fault, several Protestants also) issued a statement of admirable fairness and Christian charity, which earned them the displeasure of both Right and Left.[14] We must not forget, either, those great Catholic writers, such as Charles Péguy and Léon Bloy, who have united a fervent devotion to a passion for social justice; or the admirable work in theology and Christian philosophy which France has produced in the last twenty years, such as the devotional studies of Père Garrigou-Lagrange and the sociological work of Père Lallement.[15] The Church in France is better represented by these scholars, and by the *Jociste* workers under the German oppression, than by a few distinguished military men who, we must believe, have been honourably deluded.

THE CONTRAST WITH BRITAIN

I have left myself little space for drawing the comparison which suggests itself. We owe it to our ally to try to understand her strength and weakness, and need this understanding if we are to contribute to the future shape of Europe. And we owe it to ourselves because it will help us to appraise our own situation. There is in this country no parallel as yet to the violence and extremity of the political divisions in France – divisions which have temporarily cancelled, but cannot extirpate, French patriotism. There is in this country a more solid basis for unity in patriotism: those who need reassurance on this point should read an article by Mr. J. B. Priestley, whose broadcast talks have done so much to make articulate our faith in the actual, and our hope for the new Britain, in the August *World Review*.[16] It is a unity in which the term "Christian" does not excite faction; but though more unified, we cannot pride ourselves that we are more "Christian" as a nation than are the French Christians as a part of a nation. It is a unity in which, I believe, there is more common willingness for sacrifice and for social change than we give ourselves credit for. But the unity which has affirmed itself in war may easily disintegrate in peace; and for peace it will need the element of a more conscious, united and intrepid body of Christian thought and practice than it can yet boast.

THE CHURCH IN COUNTRY PARISHES

I should like to call attention to *The Church in Country Parishes*, the report of a committee appointed in June, 1939, by the Bishop of Winchester and chosen therefore from clergy and laity of his diocese.[17] The Bishop's initiative might well give an impulse to the preparation of similar reports in other dioceses. We are glad to see that the recommended reading recognises the agricultural studies of Sir George Stapledon: the book of Lord Northbourne, *Look to the Land*, is probably too recent to have been known before this report went to press.[18] The terms of reference of such a report are very difficult to define, and the recommendations are limited to what the clergy can do under present conditions; but the intelligent reader can perceive some of the wider vista of social questions which is opened. The question, for instance, of the difficulty of country clergy in giving their children as good an education as they have had themselves, is touched upon, and obviously raises other questions, of social status, clerical stipends, and the whole basis of class education in a changing society. The plea that agriculture should be regarded as a vocation, not merely as an industry, is one with which we are warmly in sympathy, but it obviously involves the whole orientation and scheme of values of our future society. Such problems are obviously outside of the scope of such a report: but there is one problem which I wish might have been raised, even though no local committee could be expected to get very far towards a solution. That is the question of whether the preliminary training of clergy for country work should differ in any way from that of clergy for urban or suburban areas. Nothing is said, either, about the possible usefulness of religious communities in country districts. Nevertheless, the report is very good within its limits and worth the study of everyone concerned with this vital subject.

NEWS FROM EASTERN EUROPE

From the *International Christian Press and Information Service*: "By the cession of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the U.S.S.R., the Orthodox Church [of Rumania] loses a vast field of activity. At this moment, when the Press is announcing riots, the burning of the Cathedral of Cernauti, and the tragic fate of the clergy, we would recall that two of the three seminaries of Orthodox theology in Rumania are situated at Cernauti and Kichinov.[19] These seminaries have played a great part in the life of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, even beyond the frontiers of Rumania."[20]

The same issue of this publication quotes a moving appeal by the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Estonia to the Estonian people; and informs us that, "On the island of Oesal, where the Russians are at present constructing naval bases, the church has been sold by auction."[21] It was "sold for 605 crowns to a man who intends to turn it into a saw-mill, which will be used in the building of Russian barracks."

POSTSCRIPT

I regret that pressure of other work has made it impossible for me to answer all the personal letters which call for an answer; but I hope, after the Editor's return, to be able to deal gradually with some of this correspondence.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The text of this entire issue was written by TSE as guest editor (see 6.110, n.1).

2. Philippe Pétain (1856-1951), French military leader and, after the fall of France in June 1940, head of the collaborationist Vichy Regime.

3. I.e., since the armistice with Hitler in June.

4. "The French Collapse," *The Christian Democrat*, 20 (Aug 1940), 118-22. Barbara Mary Ward (1914-81) was assistant editor of *The Economist* and author of *The International Share-out* (1938). Together with Cardinal Arthur Hinsley and Christopher Dawson, she was instrumental in the founding (on 1 Aug 1940) of The Sword of the Spirit, an antitotalitarian organization intended to unify Roman Catholic support of the British war effort and to promote Christian social values in the conduct of the war and the subsequent peace. In the years preceding the war, Ward was active in support of Jewish refugees.

5. Founded in Belgium, Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (Young Christian Workers), sought to strengthen the bonds between working-class Catholics and the Church. The British clergyman George William Outram Addleshaw (1906-82) was then vice principal of St. Chad's College, Durham. An enthusiast since an early encounter with Jocism in Belgium and France, Addleshaw "used to travel over to Sunderland to speak to young shipyard workers about the Jocist movement" (*The Times*, 18 June 1982, 12).

6. *Esprit*, founded in 1932 and edited by Emmanuel Mounier, persisted in spite of the German occupation and continues into the twenty-first century.

7. As "meridional" implies, Maurras was of Provençal origin. His reputation as a regionalist writer preceded his career with Action Française.

8. Maurras did indeed support the Vichy government, writing during the occupation as a forceful apologist for the regime. (For this activity, he would later be convicted of "complicity with the enemy.") Of longer standing was his commitment to the "Latinist" ideology that saw Mediterranean Europe as the repository of the civilization inherited from Greece and Rome, as opposed to the "Nordic" inheritors of tribal barbarism.

9. Bainville, whom TSE described in a letter of 15 Oct 1927 to Lord Halifax as the probable successor to Maurras, died 9 Feb 1936, less than a year after his election to the Académie Française (*L3* 754-55).

10. TSE met Maurras at a June 1926 dinner in Paris (not July, as he later misremembered) with Maurice Pujo, Jacques Bainville, Henri Massis, and Léon Daudet – a group that, in the aforementioned letter to Lord Halifax, TSE calls "the real leaders of the *A.[ction]F.[rançaise]*" (755). In the same letter, he expresses the opinion that "in spite of Maurras's belief in the value of aristocracy, his movement is almost entirely a middle-class movement, and is in many ways radical rather than reactionary" (755).

11. Pope Pius XII ended the interdict in 1939. However, Maritain, who had previous misgivings, had broken with the Action Française completely following the papal condemnation. During World War II, he denounced the Pétain regime and worked actively on behalf of Jewish and other refugees from Nazism. The right-wing French writer Georges Bernanos (1888-1948) likewise broke with Maurras, formerly a close ally. He too supported the Free French cause and opposed fascism, Nazism, and the Vichy regime.

12. For TSE's defense see his 1928 essay "The *Action Française*, M. Maurras and Mr. Ward" (3.369), his reply to Ward's rebuttal (3.421), and his letter of 9 Dec 1927 to the *Church Times* (3.302).

13. The Croix-de-Feu [Cross of Fire] was a rival movement of the far right. Though it was an ultranationalist paramilitary group, it did not apply the label "fascist" to itself, as TSE's "explicitly" might be taken to imply.

14. The French writer François Mauriac (1885-1970), who often employed Christian themes, was vocally antifascist. The Comité Français pour la Paix Civile et Religieuse en Espagne [French Committee for Civil and Religious Peace in Spain], a group of Catholic clergy as well as non-Catholic and Catholic intellectuals – including Maritain and Mauriac – issued "Appel français" in 1937. This appeal broadly argued that religious freedom would be the foundation for any future civil peace in Spain. Rather than taking sides, it expressed opposition to bloodshed, no matter who the perpetrator, and concluded: "We are equally aware of the need to work for the good of our own country, where the Spanish war is poisoning passions and hinders, or even prevents, a much-desired steadying of the spirits" (trans. Gerald Howson). Scores of statements were published in France on both sides of the Spanish Civil War, making it impossible to identify which manifesto of the Right or declaration of the Left TSE has in mind.

15. Daniel-Joseph Lallement (1892-1977), French theologian and Thomist philosopher. Trained by Maritain, he was, since 1922, professor of sociology at the Institut Catholique de Paris. His chief work up to 1940 was *Principes catholiques d'action civique* [*Catholic Principles of Civic Action*] (1935).

16. J. B. Priestley, "What Are We Fighting For?," *World Review* (Aug 1940), 11-18. Priestley claims that Britain abounds in "public good will" across the classes, and that the war has only deepened its sense of unity. "Nor is it a mood of jingoistic nationalism that has done this, but simply a heightened feeling of community and common purpose. . . . Thus we have here, suddenly brought into being by the stress of war, the beginning of a truly creative community of a new type, still democratic at heart, but rapidly cutting itself free from all the old tangles of sectional interests and power-seeking and anti-social minorities" (17-18). He concludes that the

British are fighting not merely for national survival but also to bring into being this "new order of society," marked by a "sense of community" and by "new [social] values."

17. *The Church in Country Parishes* (London: S.P.C.K., 1940). Bishop Cyril Garbett's charge to the committee is quoted in the book's introduction: "To consider the work of the Church in country parishes under present day conditions, and to report what changes, if any, should be made in methods of work and organization to strengthen the Church in rural areas" (xi).

18. Sir Reginald George Stapledon (1882-1960), British horticulturalist and agriculturalist. In addition to many technical papers, he was the author of *The Land: Now and Tomorrow*, which was published by Faber in 1935 and presented an agrarian and environmentalist perspective. Walter James, fourth Baron Northbourne (1886-1982), British agriculturalist, was a pioneer in "organic farming" – a term he coined in *Look to the Land* (London: Dent, 1940).

19. TSE quotes "Church Losses in Bessarabia and Bukovina," *International Christian Press and Information Service*, 27 (July 1940), 2. On 28 June 1940, two days after receiving an ultimatum, Romania ceded Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union. Soon the *Times* was reporting an "outbreak of mob violence and the brutal paying off of old scores," as well as a flight of refugees from Bessarabia ("Scenes of Mob Violence," 2 July, 4). Cernauti (also Chernivtsi, Czernowitz), the capital of Bukovina, belongs today to Ukraine; Kichinov (Kishineff, Chisinau), the capital of Bassarabia, is now the capital of Moldova.

20. The summer 1940 issues of *International Christian Press and Information Service* include many stories about the Soviet suppression of Christianity – an issue of increasing concern as the Soviet Union significantly expanded its territory in the months following its nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany.

21. "Message of the Bishop to the Estonian People" (4); "A Church Sold by Auction" (4). Oesel (or Saaremaa) is a large island in the Baltic Sea, off the west coast of Estonia. Estonia surrendered to Soviet occupation on 17 June and was annexed as the Estonian SSR on 6 Aug.

Preface to *The Testament of Immortality*,

ed. N.G. [Nagendranath Gangulee]

London: Faber & Faber, 1940. Pp. 280; Preface 9-10.[1]

To those who, like myself, take pleasure in anthologies, it is a satisfaction to observe that there can be no such thing as a final anthology on any subject. Every anthology represents a particular period of taste and a particular temperament. Furthermore, we are happy to remember that there are several possible kinds of anthology, and every anthology is to be judged and enjoyed in its own kind. There is first, of course, the collection which aims at including all the best specimens of prose or verse of their species; but which, nevertheless, if they are to win the affection of the anthology-lover, must be given a sort of unity which derives, not simply from the subject-matter, but also from the temperament and personal taste of the selector. There is, again, the anthology with a more particular purpose, consisting of passages compiled to illustrate and bring home to the public, a particular mood, passion or intellectual tendency in literary history. There is a third kind, more purely personal in inspiration, but which can, in happy instances, give pleasure to many who do not know the author. This kind has more of the nature of a commonplace-book; compiled in a leisurely way in the course of reading, for the future refreshment and solace of the compiler himself: and to this kind the present book belongs. There are other ways of classifying anthologies, which any reader can call to mind; but I only mention several varieties in order to elicit the special place of such an anthology as this *Testament of Immortality*.

The anonymous author of this book – for the compiler of a collection the unity of which is given by such personal feelings, may well deserve the title of "author" – put it together gradually with no other purpose than consolation for himself after the untimely death of a beloved son.[2] After a time he showed the manuscript to friends, who felt, as I do, that the author's feeling gives the collection a unity and strength such that it might well serve a similar purpose for others.[3] The facts that the reading is so various, that it includes, for any reader, many passages hitherto unknown, that besides many pieces which are known to all, and less known passages from authors known to all, there are others which here appear with a dignity which would probably have escaped us if we had come upon them in any other mood than that of our anthologist, combine to form a book which I believe should have, among anthologies, a place of its own. And the perceptive reader will be struck not least by the fusion of Eastern and Western culture in the anthologist's mind and heart.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Nagendranath Gangulee, or Gangopadhyay (1889-1954), Indian writer, anthologist, and agriculturalist, was a son-in-law of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. A sometime businessman, labor organizer, land manager, and professor of agriculture at the University of Calcutta (1921-31), Gangulee held a doctorate in soil biology from the University of London. He settled permanently in England in 1932 and published on several subjects. One later project was *Thoughts of Meditation: A Way of Recovery from Within* (Faber, 1951), another spiritually themed anthology for which TSE wrote a preface.

TSE read the manuscript of Gangulee's anthology in Jan 1940 but apparently did not then anticipate that Faber would publish it. On 31 Jan, he congratulated Gangulee "on the width and authority of your reading" and wished him luck in finding a publisher. By 17 Mar, however, Gangulee had received an acceptance letter from Geoffrey Faber that also included "the good news that [TSE] would be willing to write a preface." He thanked TSE for his "encouragement and support."

2. Gangulee and his wife, Mīrā Debī, lost their son, Nitindranath – Tagore's only grandson – to tuberculosis on 7 Aug 1932. *The Testament of Immortality* is dedicated "to the memory of my beloved son Nitu who came to our tavern for 21 years and then passed on to his eternal journey" (5).

3. Shortly after the publication of *The Testament of Immortality*, TSE wrote to Gangulee on 10 Oct 1940 that it had been "a pleasure to me to write a prefatory note for your anthology and I sincerely hope that it will do a little to help to get it into the hands of sympathetic readers and all to whom the book can bring comfort."

The Writer as Artist: Discussion between T. S. Eliot and Desmond Hawkins[1]

The Listener, 24 (28 Nov 1940) 773-74

Eliot: There is more than one way in which that phrase, "the writer as artist," can be interpreted, so I want to be clear from the beginning what I am talking about and what I am not. I don't think that you can divide writers sharply into two kinds, those who are artists and those who are not: I don't know of any way in which they could be so divided. No more would I divide readers into those who read for mere pastime and those who read for information and those who read in order to enjoy literary art: we all read different things for different purposes at different times, or even the same things for different purposes at different times. You cannot distinguish the artist from the ordinary "writer" simply by his conscious intention. He always has some other purpose in writing than merely to create "art"; he has something he wants to convey, and the value of what he writes is both in what he has to say and how he says it. You can't tell the artist from other writers simply by his method of working or the amount of trouble he takes: some people take much more trouble to produce bad writing than others to produce good. The artist is a man who knows when he has done the best job he can, while the man without the gift may either leave a job half finished, or else go on at it far too long – and every writer has to find out for himself when his job *is* finished. And above all I don't want you to think of the literary artist as a man who writes for a select few, either deliberately or because he can't help himself. There are good reasons why some great writers should have to wait before they are widely read or recognised: people who are ahead of their time, in any vocation, are apt to have difficulties in getting their work accepted, and to be appreciated while living only by a few. But I never heard of a writer of genius who preferred to have only a small number of readers; he is more apt to wonder why his sales are not bigger than they are. So what I want to talk about is not how to classify writers into those who are artists and those who are not, but the function of the writer as artist, in so far as he is an artist.

I believe that the writer as artist has a very vital social function, a social usefulness which goes far beyond the number of readers who consciously appreciate his artistry, which goes beyond the circle of those who read his work at all, which extends even, in time, to those people for whom he becomes merely a name on a public monument. He is useful, in the degree of his greatness, to all those who speak the same language, even if they never hear of him. As an artist, his job has been to use the right words in the right order: that is, he helps to prevent the language from deteriorating or from getting ossified; and I should like to make clear, if I can, why this is a matter of vital importance for everybody.

A great language – and English is a great language – is a marvellous social creation, dependent upon innumerable factors: history has not produced more than a very small number of great languages. A living language, one that people are using in all their daily affairs, is constantly changing: for every generation lives in a rather different world from its predecessor; it has new things and new situations to deal with, and it thinks and feels about them in a new way. But what people do not always remember is that a living language, being alive, can die.

Hawkins: Yes, but when you say *that*, you obviously don't mean that people stop speaking. What exactly happens? I suppose the language begins to lose its subtlety and its precision. You get vagueness and clichés and loss of discrimination; if it went on long enough I imagine the actual vocabulary would shrink, wouldn't it, as the more finely pointed words went out of use?

Eliot: Yes, I meant that it would deteriorate and become a second-rate language. A great language cannot become a second-rate language as quickly as a great power can become a second-rate power, and none of us lives long enough to see it happen – but it can happen. It will happen if the general level of culture, intelligence and energy declines, and if the nation ceases to produce individuals having just that preoccupation with words which marks the writer as artist – a preoccupation with words which is at the same time a concern with the exploration of subtleties of thought and feeling. So if a nation to be great must have a great language, it is the business of the writer as artist to help to preserve and extend the resources of that language.

Hawkins: Granted that that's his job – how would you say he does it?

Eliot: In any living language some words are always going out of currency, and some new words are always coming in. Furthermore, the way of putting words together is always changing. Any style, whether of prose or verse, belongs to its own period: and no writer, however skilful, can say anything that is important for his own time, or for any future time, in a style, however good, which belongs to a past age. The development of language depends primarily upon causes over which the writer has no control: and we must remember that it depends also upon the way in which each and every one of us expresses himself in every attempt to communicate with others. But when a language is in a state of energy, there is a continuous reciprocal influence of colloquial speech on writing, and of writing on colloquial speech. When you find authors writing generally in a style very different from the way people are talking, when they use a different vocabulary for common things, and a different kind of construction, then you may be sure that the language is ailing – though the sickness will not necessarily be fatal. Writers must take their language as they find it spoken: but their business is to help to make it a vehicle for civilised thought and feeling, to help to preserve, and to restore, precision in the use of words.

Hawkins: So the writer does not merely accept the popular speech of his day, uncritically. But how does he adapt it? I suppose he aims to integrate it into the historical character of the language. That is to say, he blends novelty with tradition. I don't mean that popular speech is devoid of tradition – that would be absurd. But presumably the writer has a more detailed grasp of the traditional accomplishment of the language, and he would aim to set the colloquial idiom of his own day in the perspective created by past generations.

Eliot: Yes, it is the business of the writer as artist to preserve the beauty and precision of the language – but, this, as I have said, does not mean writing exactly like the last generation. The writer must help to select those words and meanings which deserve to survive, and which we should continue to need, and to help to reject those which we can well do without. There are a great many words in the English language – more, I believe, than in any other language of comparable greatness – and a great many of these words are now dead, have served their purpose and will not come into use again.

Hawkins: And the reverse of that is also true, isn't it? As well as burying dead words he nurses the newly born ones.

Eliot: Certainly: the writer does another equally important work of selection: that of helping to choose, from among the new words and idioms in current speech and in current journalism, those which justify themselves and which deserve to be fully licensed and preserved. New ways of using the language come from various sources, and some have more merit than others. Some deserve to be accepted by the best society at once, some should be put on probation, some should be put into solitary confinement, some should be condemned to summary capital punishment.

So what should happen in a healthy language is a continuous collaboration between the few who can write it and everybody who speaks it – a collaboration none the less genuine for most people being unaware of what is going on.

Hawkins: Good. That's a splendid definition. I'm glad you stress "collaboration." It's vital to have that understood. It means surely that the *greatest* writers could not save a language which was persistently neglected and degraded by the general run of people. We are all involved in this. The culture that we inherit is not a string of pearls, to be worn when we please. It's more like a farm that must be ploughed and sown and reaped and ploughed again. We have obligations to fulfil if we want the rewards. Neglect it and it reverts to waste land. We must constantly reconquer what we expect to hold. You and I, whatever we are, play some part in the growth or the decline of the language.

It just occurs to me, by the way, that we have not done justice, to *one* group of collaborators. I mean the non-literary dead, the ancestral Man-in-the-Street. I fancy you will agree, Eliot, that our forefathers – the ones who weren't writers – come into this. I say "the ones who weren't writers," but in a sense they wrote a book to which every professional writer is infinitely indebted – I mean, the dictionary.

Eliot: Quite so. The dictionary is the most important, the most inexhaustible book to a writer. Incidentally, I find it the best reading in the world when I am recovering from influenza, or any other temporary illness, except that one needs a bookrest for it across the bed. You want a big dictionary, because definitions are not enough by themselves: you want the quotations showing how a word has been used ever since it was first used. Of course, even the best dictionary can tell you only half the story; it can only trace the history of a word from author to author – it can never tell you of the contribution made by all the anonymous people who may have used that word in talking, and helped to change or amplify its meaning. The dictionary is a work of art in which, as you say, the whole people – for thirty-odd generations – has contributed: and every time we pass a few words with a friend, we are contributing to some future edition of it. Some, of course, contribute more than others. If you look for all the uses of words – new uses for existing words, I mean, more than new words – which Shakespeare has contributed, you will find how often he discovered new meanings in old words – meanings already latent which only genius could discover. And there are some words, the history of which is almost the history of England.

So the writer as artist is the most important single factor in preserving, refreshing and developing the language. And a great language is not a separate and haphazard gift of fortune to a people: a people and its language will advance or deteriorate together. When the language degenerates, the capacity of the people for thinking, feeling, and adapting itself to new conditions also degenerates; it is the ability of a people to produce the writer as artist that prevents it from sinking to a condition in which a short scale of farmyard noises will provide all the vehicle it needs for expression and communication. And when I speak of the writer as artist, I do not want you to think only of the poet and the novelist. These two kinds of writer have their two distinct functions, and very important functions they are. But the writer as artist appears in other forms: notably, in the history of great peoples, in the form of the historian. He can also be the philosopher, the scientist; even the judge rendering a decision, the chairman writing a company report, the explorer recording his daily observations, or the naval officer recounting an action, can and should partake of this character: and in our history it has been so. A great people should be as proud of having a great language as of anything else it has achieved: and the writer as artist contributes to giving it this language.[2]

NOTES

1. In the fall of 1940, Desmond Hawkins hosted "The Writer in the Witness-Box," advertised as "a series of talks by writers and critics on the art and profession of writing and the relation of writers to their public." The interviewees included, among others, Edwin Muir, Walter de la Mare, Cyril Connolly, George Orwell, Charles Williams, Stephen Spender, and Frank O'Connor.

TSE responded with interest to overtures from Hawkins and his producer, Christopher Salmon, in late Aug; his broadcast, the eighth in the series, took place on Friday, 22 Nov, 7:00-8:00. The text, as was typical for the series, was scripted, edited, and titled before being read live. "Of course I expect Hawkins to knock the text about," TSE wrote Salmon on 15 Nov, "and to cut it down according to the exigencies of the dialogue form" (BBC Caversham).

The BBC files (Caversham) include a report by P. Thornhill of the Central Committee for Group Listening: "T. S. Eliot has a fine voice but a rather pontifical drawl. All the while he was talking I was longing for him to come down to earth and give one or two concrete examples of what he was talking about. . . . After the talk the leader [Hawkins] said that he thought it much better than last week's [with Hugh Walpole] and that there was plenty to discuss."

2. A note follows this interview in *The Listener*:

> This discussion was broadcast on November 22. Later the same evening a reading was given to illustrate Mr. Eliot's point that "the artist has something he wants to convey, and the value of what he writes is both in what he has to say and in how he says it." The extracts chosen

> were from the works of William Wordsworth ("One summer evening …" from *The Prelude*); Benjamin Haydon (account from his diary of the coronation of George IV); F. H. Bradley (opening of chapter called "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake" from *Ethical Studies*); William Blake ("Tiger! Tiger! burning bright"); Sir Charles Sherrington (from "Man on his Nature"); Shakespeare ("Fear no more the heat o' the sun"); and A. E. Housman ("Fancy's Knell," from *Last Poems*).

Apparently the selections were not, or not entirely, TSE's own. "It is very difficult to think of any suggestions for your readings," he wrote Salmon on 15 Nov 1940. "My only idea is that – following out a point I tried to make – the selections should not all be from what people know to be 'literature' (and certainly *not* fine or purple writing) but should include things which most people would not have thought of as 'literary art' but in fact have that quality. An important historical political utterance or two – if up to the best standard – would not be amiss, in order to drive home the point that Good English has a vital connection with the highest national achievement." He then mentioned two passages that were ultimately not used: Robert Falcon Scott's diary entry on the death of Lawrence "Titus" Oates in the disastrous 1911-12 British Antarctic Expedition, and Rear Admiral Barry Bingham's account of the WWI naval Battle of Jutland. In a postscript, TSE added, "*Some* verse, of course."

The English Tradition: Address to the School of Sociology[1]

Christendom, 10 (Dec 1940) 226-37

The first point that strikes me about my title is that there are not two English Situations, one Civil and one Religious, but that this is one situation, and that you cannot go very far into the Civil aspect without having to consider the Religious, and vice versa.[2] The civil history of England, and its religious history, are the same with only a difference of emphasis and detail. In this civil-religious history I find three headings, which seem to subsume all that I have to say here: I may call them Local Organization, Church and State, and Church and Dissent. Under these three headings one can discuss the social-economic history, and the political history of England, and their bearing upon the problems of the present and the future.

From my earliest acquaintance with this country I have been struck by the impression that the natural habitat of the Englishman was the small rural community, that he only accepted the industrial town and the giant metropolis as an unpleasant necessity – and perhaps all the more because of this rural instinct was indifferent to the disorderly and unchecked development of that metropolis. Such a view may seem to you to contradict your own experience, especially those of you who belong to a younger generation than my own. But I saw the English situation against the background of the transatlantic world, of a society which has grown up in and around urban foci, and therefore my eye may have been more apt to observe traces of a way of living here which preceded industrialism. It is the difference between a country in which industrialism has been imposed upon another anciently established order, and one in which settlement and industrialization were contemporary. I notice the difference even between London and any of the largest American cities; for London has grown by the gradual expansion and agglomeration of a considerable number of villages, so that its districts still have some local centres and some local character, whereas any American city is a community which has spread from one point, over an area previously uninhabited. But England has never developed the large town with even that different urban instinct shown by the structure of Paris, or other European metropolises: there is something about England which remains stubbornly attached to the parochial. The classes which enriched themselves by trade, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were animated by the ambition to obtain a country estate and a coat of arms, retire from the City and become country gentry. Even now, I dare say that there are still to be found financiers and industrialists whose ambition for their offspring is not that they also should be financiers and industrialists but part of the "county": even though a country estate now – if it is one that shows any appearance of prosperity – may be only a house and a park, a kind of façade bolstered up by stocks and shares. I am not defending the country gentleman for whom the country, agriculture and stock-breeding are nothing more than a hobby: I am only pointing out the anomaly that the most highly industrialized country in the world should be the one which has the least adapted itself and reconciled itself to its own industrialism.

Similarly, the English Church has a parochial system inherited with very little change from its pre-industrial age. Occasionally some reform, if you can call it that, like the composition of tithes (a problem which, in its importance for both the social and the religious life of the nation, has received only the most superficial treatment) comes to show that some change is taking place, though we do not know to what.[3] But we have yet to face the fact that the parochial system is one not designed for the kind of community in which the greater part of our population now live. For what is implied in the support of the clergy by tithes? First, a relation between the religion of the nation and the soil of the country, and therefore to the people cultivating that soil, a relation deeper than that of free individual choice of association. It meant a church materially dependent, like the people surrounding it, upon the natural resources of the neighbourhood and the chances of the harvest, a reciprocal tie between the church and the people which drew no distinction between church-goers and the negligent, between personal belief and unbelief, a tie which was part of the structure of society and which no individual and no one generation was free to break. The parochial system implies a system of land tenure, and the assumption that it is upon the fruitfulness of the land that we all depend. It implies also a certain security and stability of status, and a local community settled on one place. It implies a community of people who know each other, whose fathers knew each other, and whose children will continue to marry and quarrel and do business with each other. It implies everything that the tendency of industrialism is to destroy.

When we look at the very large town, we see the parochial system in full decay. True, a very able, diligent and popular priest who cares more for the people under his charge than for preferment, may build up for a time an active spiritual community in a slum neighbourhood – but one which will probably maintain its life only if it has a succession of equally able and popular incumbents. The situation of the newer suburbs is too well known to need comment. As for the more settled urban district, inhabited by the more well-to-do middle classes, the fact that they have no strong social bond, and often do not know each other, combined with greater mobility, such that many people who regard themselves as very devout regularly attend a church in some other parish where the offices are conducted more to their liking, tends to affirm at best a congregational, rather than a parochial unity.

I should like to remind you of one other aspect of the traditional religio-social system: that a form of tenure of land suitable to an agricultural society, in which man's dependence upon the fruits of the soil created a responsible relationship, becomes grotesque when it applies to the subterranean stores of coal and minerals which are irreplaceable, and also when it applies to the ground ownership of urban land used for habitation or industry. The purpose of these remarks has been to drive home what I said at the beginning, that the civil and religious elements cannot be isolated from each other. It is not simply a problem of altering a part of the whole system to fit in with modern developments: if that were so, we might, as ecclesiastical reformers, be busy in trying to adapt church organization to a world which, as civil reformers, we were trying to change in such a way that the church would not need to be altered, or, more likely, would need to be altered on very different lines. We have the problem of trying to strike the right balance between urban and rural, between agricultural and industrial life, and the problem of the future system of the Church is bound up with that. The ignoring of the integral religious-social problem, by defenders of Christian faith, has led, I think, in the past generation to our stressing the conscious element in the lapse away from Christianity, to the neglect of what I believe to have been a more powerful cause, the social changes, the mobility, the insecurity, the mechanization of minds and the atomization of individuals in an industrial age, which have operated unconsciously upon the mass of human beings.

It is from this point of view that I would invite you to reconsider our syllabus.[4] It is also from this point of view that I would invite you to consider the history of Church and State in England. We can divide it roughly into the three periods, that of before the Reformation, with a decided tension between Church and State, the period of the Royal Supremacy, and the period of Parliamentary Supremacy – which itself can be divided into two periods, that of a nominally Church of England parliament, and that of a parliament on which no religious limitations are imposed. The Church of to-day bears traces of each stage of its past; but it is as well to remember that its history to the time of Henry VIII is not merely that of a succession of bold Beckets defying the secular power, or alternatively a patriotic struggle against monstrous Papal exactions and interferences. There was a good deal of what we should call Erastianism, certainly of nepotism, in the mediaeval Church.[5] And for Erastianism itself there is something to be said: for we are not wise to attack anything without trying to recognize its merits. At least, we must recognize a wide difference, for good and for bad, between the situation of Church and State in the later eighteenth century and that of a Church in a modern state controlled by an openly, or almost openly, infidel government. There was a great deal of corruption in the Church, but a church can be corrupt without being Erastian. The most important features of the eighteenth-century relation of Church and State were, first that it was an accommodation on a very low spiritual level, in an age infected with deism, and second that it was a precarious accommodation. The low religious level was a part of the spirit of the age; the precariousness is something likely to inhere in any complete harmony between Church and State, where there is no condition of tension between the spiritual and the temporal forces. The religious spirit of the time was of a very low temperature; but religion held an important place in the religious-social system. The Church needed better men, but the age did not produce them, either in England or elsewhere; and the religious revivalism that took place did not have the necessary intellectual structure, and so the religious element in it became overpowered by the social element. We are apt to blame the Church of the eighteenth century for failing to observe and deal with the emergence of new social problems in the latter part of the century, problems of a kind which few men in any age ever have the vision to foresee the meaning of – and those men usually prophets to whom no one attends.

The point that I wish to make, in contemplating the degradation of the Church during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, is that one can draw quite another moral than simply that of the dangers of a State Church. We have no right to assume that the Church would have been any worthier of its task if it had been free to look after itself, without interference from the politicians. There is a point, I agree, beyond which the advantages for the nation of a national Church are paid for at too great a price; but we must remember that the independence of the Church may be bought at too high a price too, if that independence relieves it of its contact with the mass of the nation.

The whole structure of the arrangement of Church and State, however, rested on the assumption that England was a Christian nation, and that there was no reason to suppose that it would cease to be so; that while difficulties might be caused by the activities of dissenters, these difficulties were more to be feared in the field of social and political activities, than in the dissemination of heretical ideas. And the assumption that England was a Christian nation was in a sense true, and in a sense remains true: it was only wrong in making the very serious confusion between two kinds of belief, and two kinds of disbelief. It ignored the fact that defection in degree is as important in the long run as defection in kind, and that a Christianity which is merely a social habit has not the strength to preserve itself in a materially changing world. It ignored the fact that popular Christianity needs support of three kinds from the exceptional individuals: the maintenance of a tradition of theology which shall be at the same time orthodox in its foundations and in superstructure constantly readapted and reinterpreted for every generation, the spirit of free enquiry and criticism in the interest of social justice, and the example of individual lives of exceptional piety and sacrifice.

The position of the clergy at this stage varied according to the social advantages, the private means, and the gifts for political self-advancement displayed by the individual. Theoretically, the clergyman was a gentleman and a scholar – or at least, a university man; and often he was; but his position might vary, in the country, from that of a kind of secondary squire to that of a superior menial. In an age when philosophic thought, such as it was, tended to be free thought, and when theology was at a very low ebb, the talents for which the Church provided a career were of an administrative order, the kind required of a Civil Servant – the carrying out in detail the provisions of a system which was accepted and which it was not at all the business of the administrator to alter. This did not prepare the hierarchy for the needs of a changing world. By ignoring these changes, the Church became compromised by them. By failing to insist upon the importance of development in theology, of the study of problems of social justice, of private piety and holiness, it risked the danger that these three aspects of its life should eventually be insisted upon by three different types of rebel, and that the balance of emphasis in the total life of the Church should be upset.

There was another dangerous weakness in the educational ideals of the century. The foundation of the clergyman's education was classical study in one of the two universities; but upon this good foundation a very flimsy structure of theological work was often erected. As late as the first quarter of the nineteenth century, indeed in the 'thirties or 'forties, Bishop Blomfield was complaining of ordinands who, having perhaps a good classical degree, expected to cram their preparation for ordination into a period of months or even weeks.[6] Such indecent haste would not be tolerated now, but it should be part of our examination of the English situation to consider the effect of the changes in our educational system. I do not mean only changes in the "system," but the more insensible changes in our educational values. The kind of education formerly given to the sort of young men who became ordinands, and which at worst had the advantage of uniformity, is now, so far as it survives, only one possible form of preparation among many. We have now the danger of imposing a better and more comprehensive theological training upon a less substantial foundation, or upon a variety of unsubstantial foundations, with consequent possibilities of babel. I do not intend to pursue the topic of education, but merely to remind you of its intimate relation to our other problems. But I think that the question of the general training desirable for clergy to-day – taking into account the different backgrounds of the candidates, and of the possibility of further, more specialized training of at least three types – theology and Christian philosophy, sociology, and lastly psychology for those whose vocation is the direction of souls – is of great importance for the future activity of the clergy in the national life. And in considering the future of education, we need to consider how the present situation came to be what it is. (I would ask one further question: must not the training of the clergy, in the future, take due account of the very different sociological situations in town and village life?) So you see that we are brought back to the fundamental problem of the balance and relation of town and country in a future Britain.

This point about education, however, was intended to be parenthetical. I wished primarily to suggest that the term "Erastianism," the supremacy of the State in ecclesiastical affairs, was often used loosely with the implication that this supremacy of the State was the cause of all the weakness of the eighteenth century Church – which, I suggested, might not have been any better had it been independent. The important point about the English situation has been its diffused Christianity, rather than a sharp clerical and anti-clerical, or Christian and non-Christian division. This peculiarity must be considered also in the history of the development of dissenting sects in England. As pointed out both in the syllabus, and in my preparatory paper in *Christendom*, the development of sects has not been only, or even primarily, the appearance and propagation of theological doctrines.[7] In a society like this, in which the social-religious complex has never been wholly dissolved, though it is to-day in danger of dissolution, that is what one would expect. It can easily happen that the real elements of a conflict do not all appear. In the dissensions of the seventeenth century, the economic struggle is obscured by the social, and the social by the religious; for in an age in which religion is taken seriously, the emotions of the combatants tend to find a religious formulation. Conversely, in the last twenty years, the emotional formulation has tended to be economic and social, while fundamentally religious differences have remained in obscurity. I am not suggesting that the religious element in sectarianism is of minor importance; only that it tends to become a symbol for all the things which bind a particular group together and distinguish them from the rest of society. Now there is a sense – we must be careful to keep this qualification – in which sectarianism in England has been no more than differences *within* a National Church. It was against the National Church, and all that it implied, at the time, of social and political associations, that sectarianism arose to protest; having that Church to protest against was part of the *raison d'être* of the sects; each protest was that of a narrow section against a Church which itself had become, or appeared to be, too narrow to be genuinely National. It may be said that our Church is in an analogous position towards the Church of Rome, but I do not intend to go into that now. The difference between the religious and the social elements in religious separation could hardly be discerned, the analysis could hardly be made, even throughout the nineteenth century. Why are we in a different situation now?

As the syllabus should make evident, the religious and the political history of England cannot be separated, and it is perhaps the chief common defect of most histories of England that they are written with an inadequate understanding, an unexamined bias, or a lack of interest, in respect of the religious forces. The most important change in the nineteenth century was surely the displacement of High Church by Anglo-Catholic, the consequent dissociation from the Tory Party, the recruitment of Anglo-Catholics from various political groupings, and their critical attitude, inspired by their increasing attention to problems of social justice, to both of the political parties. It further happened that no political re-grouping that has taken place has been such as to weld the Anglo-Catholic movement to any one association in politics. The activity of Modernism may even prove to have contributed for good; for here was a movement, whatever we think of it, which also detached itself from the religious-social complex and formed itself around certain theological principles.[8] Modernism has, of course, its ancestry; we can see its relation to Whig Liberalism, to the Broad Church movement, to Benjamin Jowett and so forth;[9] it belongs socially to the more cultivated middle class and the academic bourgeoisie; but at least it has no clear political associations. And on the other hand, the decline of the Liberal Party has broken the old connection of non-conformity; non-conformists and dissenters disperse, according to their social background, into the Conservative or the Labour Party, and thus contribute to the formation of new social complexes which are no longer religious. All this has its bad aspect as well as its good; our business is not to feel gratification or regret, but to understand the situation and act accordingly. What seems to me important is that the social and political element which has heretofore been so strong in the formation and continuation of sects, is disappearing as the old lines of social groupings become obliterated. This social change has played, I think, a larger part in movements towards reunion than the promoters of such reunion generally seem to be aware. There are, of course, doctrinal dangers of the gravest character in precipitate fraternization; on the other hand I think the tendency brings into evidence a peculiarity of English sectarianism which distinguishes it from religious separations in other countries, owing to a tradition of National Christianity which even the movements of bitterest internecine strife have not extinguished. The weakness of this tradition lies in its insularity and its reliance upon social customs.

The second kind of weakness of the tradition, that of reliance upon social custom, is inseparable from its strength (similarly as the religious and the political history are inseparable) and we need to try to keep in mind both aspects, of strength and weakness, at the same time, if we are to avoid either remaining content with it or breaking with it. I have already analyzed it into three main weaknesses, the theological, the social, and the devotional or ascetic. As the third is perhaps the least essential to my terms of reference, I will deal with it first and briefly, but I wish to mention it because I think it adds some light to my main argument. Paul More, in his introduction to the theological anthology *Anglicanism*, says:[10]

> It was a favourite thesis of Baron von Hügel that the English Church, with all its excellencies, has failed in producing the variety and depth of the saintly life to be found within the Roman Communion. And this in a manner may be conceded. Naturally, in the matter of variety, it could not be expected that Christianity manifested itself through the temperament of a single people at a given time should produce as many different types of holiness as a Communion embracing a number of divergent nationalities. But if one will compare the lives in Walton with, let us say, the biographies of saints and mystics of a neighbouring country collected by Abbé Bremond, it is not at all clear that the advantage lies with Roman Catholicism.[11] And if to the little group commemorated in Walton's inimitable pages one adds Andrewes and Barrow and Taylor and Traherne and Henry More and Sir Thomas Browne and Ken, one will have a striking variety ranging through the man of prayer, the great scholar, the golden-mouthed orator, the romantic dreamer, the Platonic idealist, the devout physician, and the irreproachable prelate. [xxxix][12]

Let us assent gladly to Paul More's commendation of his beloved writers of the seventeenth century, while recognizing that looking at the English Church from overseas, with affectionate eyes, he was inclined to praise rather than to criticize. But there is a good deal more to be said than this, and we can hardly deny that even the most intensely devout Anglican writers of that age missed something that we find in the English mystics of the fourteenth century. The relevant point, however, is that the more modern English ideal has been rather that of the Christian subject and citizen and householder, playing his part in a society assumed to be Christian, and that while it has strongly disapproved those who fell far below the standard, it also discouraged those who aimed far above it. That is just what you would expect in that well-knitted, but limited, social-religious nexus. It disapproves of the idle and the unprofitable, but among them is inclined to include the contemplative.

The indifference to theology is more relevant to our study here, because it must be considered in relation to the indifference to social justice. I am not ignoring or depreciating the great and valuable contributions to theology made during the nineteenth century and up to the present moment. What I have in mind is that the Church, partly owing to its association with the State, has not found a recognized place for the theologian. The type which, in the last two hundred years, it has tended to advance is that of the efficient administrator; and as the modern tendency has been to do away with sinecures, and as the wealth of the Church has not increased, more efficiency and harder work is required of these administrators. I know that men of great theological and philosophical distinction have reached high positions; but where their intellectual activity has not been altogether extinguished by their multifarious cares over details, it has been by a very exceptional ability to do a number of things at once. Hence the theologian, if his circumstances have been such as to allow him to pursue his intellectual researches, has operated only as an individual thinker whose views may or may not come to meet with at least a temporary acceptance. The administrative mind – I am not thinking of any particular persons, but only of the pressure which immersion in that kind of task exercises upon those employed in it – is neither conservative nor progressive, but works the machine as it finds it.

I have spoken of the position of theology in general, because of something that I mentioned earlier: the tendency, when the religious-social tradition of the people is such that the Church has neglected theology, social justice, and asceticism, for the three defects to be repaired by three different sets of zealots, instead of in collaboration. It is, I take it, a function of this School to try to stimulate a study of social problems on the basis of sound Christian doctrine, and not leave them to the care of social reformers with merely a vague Christian spirit to inspire reform; and it has to combat two prejudices, one that the establishment of social justice needs no philosophy behind it at all, and the other that all it needs is a secular philosophy.

The reading of English political and religious history which I have tried to indicate is, I admit, a partial and selective one: I have only tried to elicit one aspect which, however, I believe to be a useful one to keep before us. It is that the general deterioration of English Christendom, in spite of valiant and noble sporadic attempts – and by deterioration here I mean not merely the falling away from some static good, but the failure to keep up with the times, for we deteriorate as much by failing to develop and adapt ourselves as by losing what had been gained – is a case not so much of direct apostasy and infidelity, not so much of the invention and propagation of non-Christian or anti-Christian opinion, as of a decline of the general level of our Christianity. We are so accustomed to the idea of the modern world as tending to divide itself sharply into Christians and non-Christians, that this other aspect may be worth consideration. So far as my historical knowledge can safely take me – and in such matters I speak with great diffidence – there is a radical difference between the development of secularism in this country and that in Protestant Germany. In the latter country, it seems to me, there was from the beginning a latent assumption that the temporal and spiritual powers had quite separate and distinct fields of action which could not conflict. In England, it was rather assumed that the ruler or rulers were Christians – for the monarch as monarch is the incumbent of a kind of ecclesiastical as well as temporal office – and that they could be relied upon to act, in temporal affairs, in as Christian a manner as these affairs permitted – that is, that according to Christian prescription, they would in any choice of evils choose that which Christian understanding advised to be the lesser evil. The notion of a neutral area, to which Christian social ethics did not apply, came, it seems to me, later, and perhaps was not fully established until political economy came to be regarded as a normative, rather than a purely descriptive science. The separation of the ecclesiastical and the temporal spheres of action, the separation between private and public morality, between the religious and the civil life of the individual, has come about gradually and indirectly, and, if I may put it paradoxically, rather as a result of the too close union of the religious and secular than as a result of division. Puritanism has no doubt played a large part in determining the distinction between personal and business morals, but the notion that success in business was itself morally meritorious seems to have preceded the notion that business was a sphere in which private morals did not apply. In short, we have gone wrong in the course of history, rather by assuming that we were Christians in an indefectibly Christian society, than by deliberately repudiating Christian private and social ethics. At the present time – only very recently – we have begun to be aware of at least the potentiality of the revival of a sense of community in this country. It seems to me desirable that we should take what is left of the religious-social unity, and try to elevate it to a higher degree of consciousness, developing within it, rather than outside of it, that necessary tension between the temporal and the ecclesiastical, the material and the spiritual, which has, for the most part, been its chief historical defect.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. For the context of this lecture, see the first note to "The English Tradition: Some Thoughts as a Preface to Study," TSE's prefatory words on the same topic (6.71). Because of the postponement of the School of Sociology, TSE's address, originally scheduled for 22 June, was finally given on 30 Sept.

2. The title of TSE's lecture as announced at the School of Sociology was "Social Elements in the English Tradition, Civil and Religious: Their Strength and Weakness."

3. The "composition of tithes": essentially, reform of the ecclesiastical taxation system to alleviate the burden on tenants. The Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 substituted monetary payments for "payments in kind" (i.e., of agricultural produce) to local parishes and private landlords. See TSE's discussion of the Tithe Bill of 1936 in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1936 (5.381-83).

4. On the syllabus for the 1940 Summer School of Sociology, and on its relation to TSE's concerns, see the annotations to his prefatory essay (6.71, nn.1-2).

5. The doctrine of Erastianism (erroneously attributed to the Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus) advocates the primacy of the state over the church.

6. Charles James Blomfield (1786-1857), English clergyman, was Bishop of Chester from 1824 and of London from 1828 to 1856. The aptitude of the clergy was a concern from early in his ministry – see, for example, his *Charge Delivered to the Clergy of His Diocese, by Charles James, Bishop of London, at his Primary Visitation in July, 1830* – and he raised the standards of training and competence required for ordination. In *The Rock* (1934), TSE eulogizes Blomfield as "one who accomplished much, in a time of drought and desolation / . . . / One who was usually right, / And never intimidated, never disheartened."

7. See "The English Tradition: Some Thoughts as a Preface to Study" (6.64-67) and George Every's contribution to the syllabus (9-10).

8. "Modernism" in this context refers to a movement, originating in the late nineteenth century, that sought to reconcile religious understanding with modern philosophy and scientific knowledge.

9. The Whig party originated in opposition to absolute monarchy and the claims of the (Roman Catholic) Stuarts; in the 18th century the party supported a liberal toleration of religious dissent. The nineteenth-century Broad Church movement accommodated the opposing high-church and evangelical tendencies within the Church of England by deemphasizing the importance of doctrine and specific ritual practices. Jowett was a modernizing theologian of the nineteenth century.

10. TSE quotes from More's introductory essay, "The Spirit of Anglicanism," in *Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross (London: S.P.C.K., 1935), xix–xl.

11. More alludes here to Izaak Walton's *Lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert & Dr. Robert Sanderson* (1640-78), and to Henri Brémond's chronicle of French saints and mystics in his eleven-volume *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'a nos jours* (1916-36).

12. More's references are to significant English clerics and writers whose contributions to seventeenth-century Anglican literature are anthologized in his book: Lancelot Andrewes; the scholar, preacher, and mathematician Isaac Barrow (1630-77); Jeremy Taylor; Thomas Traherne; the philosopher, theologian, and poet Henry More (1614-87); Thomas Browne; and the clergyman and hymnist Thomas Ken (1637-1711).

A Commentary

The New English Weekly, 18 (5 Dec 1940) 75-76

There was a period – from 1926 or so, and roughly lasting for about ten years – when all the interesting new writers who appeared were associated with the Marxist faith. (This generalisation is not quite valid in retrospect, but so it seemed, and so it was generally believed, at the time). This direction of change of thinking and feeling was, as Mr. Spender correctly put it, "forward from Liberalism"; and if it should have been disturbing to any people, those people should have been the elder generation of Fabian intellectuals who were its spiritual parents.[1] To those who were not Fabian-Liberals, this movement could not cause much dislocation: it ran on rails which did not intersect our own; it ignored so much that we felt to be of capital importance, that in never causing us to quarrel with ourselves, it never really ruffled our good humour with its upholders. I think that I now discern the beginning of a new state of mind in a rather younger generation, which does not leave me so impassive. The parent, when he first recognises in the features of his infant a sudden parody of his own, may contemplate this strange little comedian with a mixture of horror and fascination. That a younger generation should have grown up familiar with the doctrines of *The New English Weekly*, and *The New Age*, is in principle delightful, but the results may cause surprise: just as it is perpetually disconcerting to parents, that their children are not in every respect duplicates of themselves – the sons of the fathers, and the daughters of the mothers.[2]

Some of this alarm comes to me when I look at Mr. Ronald Duncan's enterprise, *The Townsman* (or just *Townsman*).[3] Ideas with which I am familiar and at ease (though I can claim no part in originating them) turn up with some slight difference in their features. Even Christianity, even the Church, is not ignored – not at all: I find my immediate fear to be rather lest it be compromised. Communism is contemned; monetary reform, decentralisation, the revival of agriculture and the agricultural life are demanded, mob rule is denounced – yet I feel like a Tory who becomes aware that he is also (having been born when he was, and not several generations earlier) something of a Liberal; or a *requete* who has strayed in to a meeting of phalangists,[4] or a Frenchman attached to the *ancien régime*, who, having come to accept the Marseillaise as the national anthem, might find himself gaoled for singing it. I did not much like Canon Smyth's point of view in some recent *N.E.W.* correspondence (though it was more the nasty way he said it) but there was a feeling behind it which I – and I believe Major Dobreé, whose letter was the best contribution to the controversy – share.[5] I can only indicate it by saying that to me the phrase "King and Country" is one to be taken seriously; that when Mr. Duncan writes in his magazine "I would defend England if I knew where England was," I want to know what about it; and that among my mixed feelings about *Townsman* some are expressed by Lord Lymington in a letter in the same number.[6]

The air may clear a bit after *Townsman* has fully assimilated the influence of Mr. Pound, whose powerful personality inspires its pages, and some of whose sillier sallies have decorated them. I believe that this influence is all to the good, so long as it takes the proper course of an influence and does not become a possession (there is an essay on the Earl of Rochester by the editor which is excellent, and which might be a ringer for one of Pound's[7]): I only fear the apparition of Mr. Pound's imaginary hero, the Strong Man. I did not set out, however, to write about *Townsman* (which I recommend to all readers who have the imperturbability to be irritated by it in the right way, and the latest issue of which is quite the best so far) but about Mr. Duncan's volume of three plays, *The Dull Ass's Hoof* (a capital title, and a neat quotation from Ben Jonson).[8] The plays are mostly verse: the first, which is the most ambitious and most interesting, appeared serially in *Townsman*, and was the most considerable contribution to the numbers in which it was published.[9] It is about coal miners, and it gives me the impression that Mr. Duncan must have some direct knowledge of miners and mining. That is one source of its strength: its weakness is that he does not know so much about audiences – even audiences consisting of miners. I perceive that Mr. Duncan, by his epigraph from Jonson, with the lines

Make not thyself a page
To that strumpet, the stage

has implicitly repudiated the laws of the theatre; but I do not believe that it is so easy to adopt a form without adopting its conditions. The conditions I mean are that there must be a plot with a perfectly clear meaning, however many other meanings may be hidden behind it; and that the language also, and every speech that is not a lyrical interlude, should have a perfectly clear and immediately apprehensible meaning, the relation of which (or the irrelevance of which) to the action should not be obscure. I also believe that if a play is to be readable, it must be *intended* for the stage – with a few exceptions which require no explanation, such as *Atalanta in Calydon*.[10] I have read "The Unburied Dead" three times: it is concerned with miners, a death in the pit, an abortive strike, and the relations between a miner's son, called Scholar, and a girl called Leafy. Some of the miners' dialogue reads very well, especially in the more lyrical and choral passages. The principal personages are not given much characterisation. A rather mysterious person named Jan has some good remarks, but I cannot regard Scholar as anything but a prig. Even as poems, some of his utterances seem rather chopped: and as dramatic poetry, the arrangement of the lines does not seem to bear a close relation to the pauses of speech.

> Like two charged carbons, we
> stick out from whole circuit of
>   time's meticulous resistance.
> Past has some point when
>   focussed through your eyes.
> Assiduous centuries, sifting
> slack dump of ordinary desire,
> discovered a few reckless lovers who,
> in some besieged city
> Troy, Florence or Rhondda,
> wrestled with their now
>   then melted,
> moulded your present features . . . [24]

I do not understand the first three lines, or the reason for the stress on "we" and "of" which their position gives them. I think I get the idea of the following lines, and it is one which has possibilities: but the effect of the presentation is, that the speaker seems more pleased by his own gift of language, than stirred by the passion which Leafy is supposed to have aroused in him. The effect on me is as of a tortured frigidity. Yet the play as a whole has made a strong impression on me, the impression, perhaps, of Mr. Duncan's personality. Whether he likes human beings I cannot tell. Whether he is a dramatist I am doubtful; he may be merely an amateur in this form like myself and others: I am not even sure whether verse is his proper medium, or whether his gifts are creative or destructive. But that they are worthy of being noticed and watched I am sure.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Stephen Spender's influential *Forward from Liberalism* (1937) advocated Popular Front strategies against capitalism. The Fabian Society, founded in the late nineteenth century, campaigned for gradual progress toward socialism.

2. The literary journals *The New Age* and *The New English Weekly* are both associated with A. R. Orage, who edited the first for more than fifteen years and later founded the second. Thus, the "doctrines" to which TSE refers would encompass Nietzschean philosophy, guild socialism, mysticism, and Social Credit economics.

3. Ronald Duncan (1914-82), British (Rhodesia-born) poet, librettist, and playwright. Following a suggestion from Ezra Pound, he founded *Townsman* in 1938; the magazine became *The Scythe* in 1944 before folding the next year.

4. The Requetés – the militia of the monarchist, devoutly Catholic Carlist movement – fought alongside the nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. Tensions with Francisco Franco, however, culminated in the forced "unification" of the Carlist movement with the Falange Party in 1937.

5. The controversy centered on J. B. Priestley's popular Sunday-evening broadcasts, which, Smyth felt, were exceeding their mandate for wartime inspiration and taking on a (Leftist) political cast. In "The Significance of Mr. Priestley," in the *NEW* of 20 Aug 1940, Smyth particularly criticized Priestley's insistence that the war be fought not merely to defeat the Axis but also to make possible a more socially just Britain (205-06). Smyth's article drew objections from Philip Mairet, Herbert Read, and Bonamy Dobrée, among others. TSE, however, seems to have in mind a second round of correspondence touched off by Smyth's strongly worded rebuttal on 19 Sept, which condemned "the Left" for attaching conditions to their support of the war effort. "The Right, on the other hand," wrote Smyth, "are content when the necessity arises or is forced upon them, to fight in defence of King and Country without it occurring to them to exploit the situation in the interests of their own political concerns and aspirations, or to make any stipulations as to the social and political changes that must be effected when the war is over" (251-52). Dobrée shot back on 19 Oct: "I resent the imputation that I am not working for King and Country; the difference is that Canon Smyth and I do not seem to be giving our services to the same country." Dobrée took exception to Smyth's "evident attack upon all of us who believe that we ourselves are responsible for the kind of society we live in, and who are endeavouring, in however small a way, to cause our society to be permeated by the ideas of justice and free creative life" (283-84).

Both Smyth and Dobrée had been frequent contributors to the *Criterion*. Although TSE thought highly of Smyth, he asked him more than once to moderate the tone of his reviews. "[Smyth] is a very competent historian," he would remark to John Hayward on 5 Jan 1942, "but perhaps somewhat lacking in charity. He used to write with a fury which [Kenneth] Pickthorn (who is by no means mealymouthed) and myself used to try to make him see tended to incline the reader's sympathy towards whatever he was attacking. I fear that he may eventually become a particularly crusty old bishop."

6. "Editorial No. 12," *Townsman*, 3 (Nov 1940), 2. Inveighing against British politics, the economic system, and the war, Duncan writes, "I would defend England if I knew where England was. How much of Leicester Square is England? . . . Only one person in every ten on this island produces or makes anything. The rest sell it, tax it, insure it, wrap it in cellophane, and play commercial badminton with the Argentine. What's left of England is the Land."

In a letter printed in the same issue, Viscount Lymington finds his admiration for *Townsman*'s agrarian platform vitiated by the unpatriotic attitude he detects in "a very great deal of what you publish." He particularly criticizes a set of harshly censorious "Poems from the War" credited pseudonymously to "Lance Corporal." "Whatever may be the personal beliefs of the writer," writes Lymington, "nothing can excuse the appearance of such stuff at this time, however bitter many may feel against the great international interests" (24).

7. Duncan, "Rochester," *Townsman*, 3 (Nov 1940), 14-21. The issue in which the essay appears is the same one to which TSE alludes in his next sentence.

8. Duncan, *The Dull Ass's Hoof: Three Plays* (London: Fortune, 1940). The volume includes "The Unburied Dead," "Ora Pro Nobis," and "Pimp, Skunk and Profiteer." Its title, as well as its epigraph, comes from the final stanza of Jonson's "Ode to Himself":

And since our dainty age
   Cannot endure reproof,
Make not thyself a page
To that strumpet, the stage,
   But sing high and aloof,
Safe from the wolf's black jaw, and the dull ass's hoof.

Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509-1660, ed. J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1929).

9. Duncan published "The Unburied Dead" scene by scene, beginning in the first (Jan 1938) issue of *Townsman* and ending in the sixth (Apr 1939). The other two plays in *The Dull Ass's Hoof* appeared in the Nov 1939 issue.

10. In his early *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), A. C. Swinburne attempts to revive the form of Greek tragedy in English verse.

Views and Reviews: Waiting at the Church

A review of *The Betrayal of Christ by the Churches*, by J. Middleton Murry

London: Dakers, 1940. Pp. 91.

The New English Weekly, 18 (19 Dec 1940) 99

If Mr. Middleton Murry is right in his condemnation of the present moral and intellectual condition of "the Churches" – and I am not here taking the rôle of their defender – then it is to be expected that he will find many clergy to agree with him; and of those who contest his charges, it is likely that many will do so on the wrong ground. Mr. Murry's fervid style lends itself well to a denunciation of anything so ambiguous as "the Church" or "the Churches"; and the sense of indignation which he communicates may conceal from us some of the implications.

It is then with Mr. Murry, and not with the present condition of the Churches, that I am concerned. I am still less concerned with Lord Halifax, an indictment of whose words and actions constitutes one of the most persuasive chapters of the book, or with the Bishop of Ely.[1] These two public men stand, in Mr. Murry's examination, for the contemporary lay and ecclesiastical minds respectively. I seem to detect, however, a slight substitution in Mr. Murry's argument after dealing with the Bishop, which is perhaps not without interest. The Bishop had been so unfortunate as to say, in a pastoral to his diocese: "The clergy have no title which can enable them to see more of the causes of the war than the altogether admirable men conducting the affairs of the nation."[2] Two pages later Mr. Murry quotes *The Times*, which approved of Mr. Churchill because, it said, he was "war-minded."[3] Mr. Murry proceeds to comment: "I am not a bishop; so it had not occurred to me that war-mindedness was the *outstanding* quality of an altogether admirable man" [57]. But this is not the Bishop, but *The Times* in quite another context; and the Bishop might well protest against having his words construed as implying that war-mindedness was the outstanding quality of an altogether admirable man. Mr. Murry goes on to observe that the great warriors whom he can respect have been, or have become, peace-minded men. "Such was Alexander, such was Julius Caesar." I should have thought that

Alexander, or Julius Caesar, while occupied with making war, was as war-minded as anybody: but the insinuation is (whether Mr. Murry was aware of it or not) that Mr. Churchill prefers war to peace. Thus, in one paragraph Mr. Murry succeeds in conveying illicit censure of both the Bishop of Ely and Mr. Churchill (57). I am not defending the Bishop or even Mr. Churchill, but merely examining Mr. Murry's methods.

There are, however, more serious considerations than these. It has always been a doctrine of the historically most important of the "Churches," that "the Church" was founded by Our Lord: with this doctrine that of the apostolical succession is bound up. This doctrine may be considered an error: but at least, no one can deny that it makes a vast difference to our approach to criticism of the Churches, whether we accept it or not. If we believe one thing or the other, we should make our point of view clear; and we should recognise that the attitude of those who hold the other view will differ in important respects from our own. Mr. Murry does not declare himself on this issue until page 165, when he says merely, "to the historical mind it is apparent that the Christian Church is essentially a human institution." He does not define the historical mind, or suggest any limitation on its validity. Neither on this point, nor on other vital issues of Christian belief, does he recognise the possibility of any superior mind of our time being able to hold any other views than his own. Such other views are held, it seems, only "among the simple-minded members of the Churches – principally among the peasantry" [67].[4]

Mr. Murry tells us quite frankly: "I neither believe in the Church, nor believe as the Church believes" [62]. He makes certain broad-minded concessions:

> I am quite willing to admit both the historical truth of the apostolical succession and the possibility that divine authority has been transmitted by its means. [64]

What can *willing* here mean except that this is a matter of indifference? And are the two concessions really on the same footing? It seems to me that if the apostolical succession is "historically true" then the transmission of divine authority by its means is not a possibility but a certainty.

> I am equally willing to admit the efficacy of the Eucharist *ex opere operato* and the existence in the Christian Church of a unique channel of

> communication whereby the power of God can he brought to bear upon the affairs of men.[5] [64]

Yet he has told us that he does not believe in the Church, and he refers repeatedly to "magical practices": and if a belief in the efficacy of the Eucharist *ex opere operato* does not imply a magical practice in Mr. Murry's use of that term, I do not know what does. Mr. Murry calls the belief in the physical resurrection of the body a "crude belief," but accepts the possibility at least of the resurrection in a "spiritual body," by which he believes he means much the same as St. Paul meant [170-71].[6] His emphasis, however, is usually on this world, and sometimes, in referring to a future life, he has recourse to the hesitations of modernism. The disciples of Jesus "were *persuaded*," after his death (the lower case is Mr. Murry's; the italics are mine) "that he was present among them still"; and "*[s]ustained by that conviction* they preached his gospel still" [165-66]. We are hardly surprised, then, to find on the last page (191) Mr. Murry exclaiming about Christ "What does it matter to us whether he be, or be not, God?"

If my purpose were to make this account of Mr. Murry's beliefs serve as a rebuttal of his charges against the Church or the Churches, that would be illegitimate. I could accept a still more violent denunciation if it came from somebody who was definitely either *inside* or *outside*. I could accept it from someone who was tolerant or intolerant – so long as he admitted the existence of other views than his own, and recognised the importance of the differences. But I do not believe that one betrayal is rectified by another. I wish that, instead of writing this only destructive book, Mr. Murry had developed the implications of one sentence in it which seems appropriate to quote in these columns:

> Many young men and women to-day have a clear instinctive perception that the observance of a new frugality of living, and the restoration of direct relation with the earth that is the source from which man's life is nourished, is a condition precedent to the renewal of religion. [179]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Murry accuses Halifax, whom he calls England's preeminent "Christian statesman," of refusing to accept generational and personal responsibility for the war (via the Treaty of Versailles) and of instead scapegoating "German youth." In such thinking Murry perceives a failure of Christian conscience (25-44). Bernard Heywood (1871-1960) was Bishop of Ely from

1934 to 1940 and author of *This Is Our Faith: An Explanation of the Articles of the Christian Faith as Contained in the Apostles' Creed* (1938).

2. The passage Murry quotes is part of a wartime injunction that continues, "They [the clergy] should refrain from publicly expressing opinions on matters on which their counsels are valueless and their information partial" (55).

3. Murry refers to Churchill's 1939 appointment as First Lord of the Admiralty. Commending this appointment in the issue of 4 Sept 1939, the *Times* editorialized in "The War Cabinet": "Mr. Churchill comes in now as a matter of course, because he is a man of dynamic energy, most fertile imagination, and warlike temperament. These are the qualities essential to a War Cabinet" (9). Recalling – and slightly misquoting – this praise, Murry remarks that it "did not seek to persuade me that Mr. Churchill was an altogether admirable man; [it] merely insisted that he was an excellent man for the country's new purpose, which was to make war, because he was 'war-minded'" (57).

4. In Murry's context, the "view" in question is specifically the "old vivid belief in the judgment after death" (67).

5. The theological principle of "ex opere operato" ("from the action performed") holds that the efficacy of a sacrament originates in Christ and is therefore not dependent on the virtue of the human minister.

6. See 1 Cor. 15:44 on the resurrection of the dead: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

A Message to the Fish[1]

Horizon, 3 (March 1941) 173-75

On January 14, having read the obituary notice of James Joyce which had appeared in *The Times* of that morning, I addressed to the Editor of that paper the following letter:[2]

Sir, – I hope that you will permit me to submit one or two cautious qualifications to your interesting obituary notice of my friend Mr. James Joyce. That Joyce failed to appreciate "the eternal and serene beauty of nature" can, I think, be disputed by reference to several passages in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*; but being separated from my books, I cannot quote chapter and verse. As for his inability to appreciate "the higher sides of human character," this stricture would, perhaps, be more applicable to Jonathan Swift, and I should ask the reader, before accepting such a judgement, to consider "The Dead," in *Dubliners* – one of the finest short stories in the language.[3]

What I chiefly question, however, is the importance at this date of the opinions of men older than Joyce, holding the views of an older literary generation, such as Edmund Gosse, Arnold Bennett, or AE.[4] To some of Joyce's younger contemporaries, like myself, *Ulysses* still seems the most considerable work of imagination in English in our time, comparable in importance (though in little else) with the work of Marcel Proust. I do not believe that posterity will be able to controvert this judgement, though it may be able to demonstrate the relative insignificance of the literary achievement of the whole period.

Your obedient servant, etc.

As this letter was not published, I wrote a fortnight later to say that I presumed myself free to publish it elsewhere, and received a polite note from the Obituaries Department returning the letter, and expressing regret that restrictions of space had made publication impossible.

It was not a well-written letter, partly because I was ill with influenza when I wrote it. But its oddity is rather more due to the fact that I wished to write something that *The Times* would print, and I entertained the hope that it might get by as an "Appreciation."[5] Had I not been hampered by illness and a sense (however imperfect) of the possible, I might have written in somewhat the following vein:

Sir, – I have read with stupefaction your obituary notice on the greatest man of letters of my generation. It is usual, I believe, for editors of newspapers to have ready obituary notices of all notable men and women. This practice is wholly to be commended; but the notices should be written by the right persons in the beginning, and should then be kept up to date. The impression given by your notice of Mr. Joyce is that it was written by someone considerably older than he – someone who by now must be well over fifty-nine. That it was in some sense brought up to date I must believe, since, being an obituary, it mentions the date and place of Joyce's death; but this does not cover the requirements. I am not alluding to oversights such as the failure to mention that *Work in Progress* was eventually completed and published under the title of *Finnegans Wake*: I refer to the inclusion of trivialities about the man, and the failure to show any understanding of the significance of his work in its time.[6]

I am quite aware that at the present time considerations of space are of first importance. For this reason I venture to point out how you might have saved space. Whatever the various distinction of Sir Edmund Gosse, Arnold Bennett and AE in other fields, none of them could lay claim to any authority as a critic; and phrases taken from what they said about Joyce many years ago could well have been spared. So could the estimate of your obituary writer. The first business of an obituary writer is to give the important facts about the life of the deceased, and to give some notion of the position which he enjoyed. He is not called upon to pronounce summary judgement (especially when his notice is unsigned), though it is part of his proper function, when his subject is a writer, to give some notion of what was thought of him by the best qualified critics of his time. I suggest also, in view of your limitations of space, that to mention that Joyce was one of "a large and poor family" was unnecessary; and that a silly remark of his when a young man may give the reader the mistaken impression that vanity was the most conspicuous trait of his character, and the equally mistaken impression that we have the authority of Yeats for permission to ignore Joyce's work.[7] And, as you did not have space to mention that *Ulysses* was eventually published in both England and America, it would perhaps have been better to omit mention of its previous suppression.

I must try to make quite clear that the issue which I raise has nothing to do with the difference between my valuation of Joyce's work and that of your writer. I am not concerned with matters of opinion, but with matters of fact; and were my opinion of Joyce still lower than that of your biographer, my condemnation of your notice would be the same. My motives in writing this letter extend much further than loyalty to a friend or desire to see justice done to a particular author. The name and fame of Joyce were known throughout the world: *The Times* has an equally wide reputation. I do not believe that your notice will much affect the world's opinion of Joyce; but I fear lest it may be used as evidence by those who choose to believe that England has lost respect for that one of the arts for which it has been chiefly renowned.

I am, yours, etc.,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The title alludes to Humpty Dumpty's poem in *Through the Looking Glass*, which begins, in pertinent part, "I sent a message to the fish: / I told them 'This is what I wish,'" and recounts the narrator's attempt to exact revenge when the fish refuse to accede to his unspecified demands.

2. At issue is the obituary "Mr. James Joyce: Author of *Ulysses*," *The Times* (14 Jan 1941), 7. TSE wrote to Stuart Gilbert on 7 Mar 1941 of the need "to protest against the abominably stupid obituary notices which have appeared. I wrote a letter to *The Times* which *The Times* did not publish and I am publishing it with comments in the next number of *Horizon*."

3. *Dubliners* (1914); *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916); *Ulysses* (1922); *Finnegans Wake* (1939). The obituary states: "It would seem . . . that the appreciation of the eternal and serene beauty of nature and the higher sides of human character was not granted to Joyce – or at least did not appear in his work."

4. Gosse was born in 1849; both Bennett and the Irish poet, mystic, and journalist AE (George William Russell) in 1867. The obituary uses these older literary figures to illustrate the "extremes of opinion on Joyce's work," citing Gosse's censure, Bennett's praise, and AE's puzzlement.

5. The *Times* sometimes supplemented its obituaries of eminent persons with "appreciations" or "tributes" from contemporaries. Joyce's obituary, for example, is preceded by an appreciation of the aviator Amy Johnson and followed by two tributes to Lord Robert Baden-Powell, military hero and founder of the Scout Movement.

6. The obituary does acknowledge that Joyce's use of "interior monologue . . . has had a far-reaching influence on the technique of many modern writers." It immediately adds that *Ulysses* "has many repellent or merely boring passages," while granting that it is "intensely alive, fundamentally Irish, full of Rabelaisian 'humour,' with a highly developed sense of time and a fantastic imaginative faculty."

On *Work in Progress*, the obituary comments: “In it the word-coinages that were a feature of *Ulysses* were multiplied and extended to the point of unintelligibility.” As TSE notes, the publication of *Finnegans Wake* is not mentioned.

7. “In his student days,” the obituary says of Joyce, “he was so self-opinionated and vain that he said to W. B. Yeats: ‘We have met too late; you are too old to be influenced by me,’ to which the poet made answer: ‘Never have I encountered so much pretension with so little to show for it.’”

Towards a Christian Britain[1]

At the point at which I enter this discussion,[2†] I am able to take for granted that a Christian Britain is desirable. But to agree that something is desirable is not the same thing as desiring it; and if we are seriously to entertain the idea of a Christian Britain, we might as well consider in advance what an extraordinary aim this is, and how different from any of the kinds of reform or revolution that men commonly undertake. In the first place, it is unlikely that any of us, if we were presently translated to this Christian Britain, would find ourselves perfectly at home in it. It is something which demands an inner change of the individual as well as an outer change of society. I can, of course, imagine quite a different and much pleasanter society from that in which I live, so long as I assume that I shall be the same Tom, Dick, or Harry in it. I know that I should have to be different too; but to see this changed myself at all clearly is beyond the scope of imagination. We must recognise that a Christian Britain demands sacrifice from all – sacrifice of mean, petty, and selfish desires; and that what we stand to gain by it is not merely something that we now desire, but a change and perfection of our present desire and will.

Beside this thought, there is a question I should like to put to you for consideration after you have heard me out. The question to which I am to speak is: what can we do to help to bring about a Christian Britain? The question I put to you is: what sort of an answer do you expect? If you do not consider what is possible, you will not know what to ask for, and you will be dissatisfied with whatever I say. If I propose certain definite things that we can do, they will probably seem to you quite inadequate to the magnitude of the task: if I try to avoid this kind of anti-climax, I may leave you with the feeling that I have uttered only amiable platitudes which have got us nowhere. I do not want merely to offer some scheme of worldly reform which would have no need of Christianity to make it appear desirable. And I do not want to talk that language of spiritual aspiration which is nothing but words. But if you see that I have to try to avoid both of these pitfalls, you will make things easier for me.

The simplest way to begin, I think, is this. We recognise three kinds of Christian duty: duty towards God, duty towards one's neighbour, and duty towards oneself. The first can be represented by worship, the second by the effort for social justice, and the third by personal and private morality. But we have only to think for a moment to realise that each kind of duty implies, and in a sense comprehends, the others, and that none is wholly itself unless it is the others too. We are not doing our duty towards God if we are indifferent to social injustice, or if we neglect our own moral and spiritual development; we cannot truly cultivate our own moral and spiritual nature and remain indifferent to God and to our fellow men; and finally, we cannot build a Christian social order if we neglect worship or belittle the duty of self-improvement. This is obvious: but in point of fact we always tend to emphasise one duty to the neglect of others, and from this lopsidedness many of our troubles spring.

During the second part of the nineteenth century and the earlier part of this, a great deal was written urging social reform, and a good deal of action was taken. People tended to think that the problems of this world could all be solved in terms of this world except when they supinely assumed that God did not mean us to solve them at all. And as for the Christian faith, its demands appeared to most people to be satisfied by certain observances: by the code of morals of respectable people, churchgoing, charitable contributions, perhaps family prayers. But politics was politics, and business was business. Nowadays we take the point of view that we are, each and all of us, somehow responsible for the kind of society in which we live. Hence, alongside of numerous secular schemes for putting the world right, there has grown up a considerable body of Christian criticism of our inherited social and economic order, and a widespread feeling of Christian responsibility in matters of social justice.

This new emphasis was very necessary; but we have to keep in mind that we shall never realise our Christian social aims if we cultivate them in forgetfulness of our duty towards God and our duty towards ourselves. The old-fashioned family-prayers type of Christian life is now unpopular, and was often perfunctory and unattractive: but it insisted upon the important truth that Christian life begins in the family. It was usually defective in two ways: first, in teaching morality as an end in itself, or as a set of prohibitions, instead of as a necessary condition of the progress towards spiritual perfection which is the Christian goal. Second, in failing to lead the way to Christian thinking: in assuming that faith was something to be preserved, if possible, from childhood, rather than something to be developed throughout maturity. It sounds as if I was asking a great deal of Christian parents:

but it seems excessive because we now tend to expect too much of the schoolmaster. And there is one essential for a Christian start in life which the home, and the home only, can provide: the influence of a Christian atmosphere from the earliest years. Children are more influenced by what their parents are, than by what their parents tell them to be. So the first thing is not that parents should teach their children Christianity, but that they should be Christian parents.

Now, I have mentioned "Christian thinking," and I want to explain what I mean. Consider the five points recently put forward by His Holiness the Pope, and the supplementary five points of the Archbishops, the Cardinal-Archbishop, and the Moderator.[3] As nearly everyone can accept them, we are apt to overlook the possibility of our giving them different interpretations, and accepting them only on our own terms. It will make a vast difference how much phrases like "the laws of God," "Divine vocation," and "God's gifts to the whole world" happen to mean to you. The full meaning is tremendous. But if they come to you like familiar quotations, as something which you need make no fresh effort to understand, they will probably be lost on you. This is one instance of what I mean by the necessity for Christian thinking. I mean thinking *as* Christians. We need to know what it is that we profess to believe, and without believing which we are not Christian. We must know the dogmas of our faith – and if you do not know what a dogma is, or why it is vitally important, then the first thing that you can do to help towards a Christian Britain is to find out. For otherwise your social thinking is not likely to be particularly Christian. Christian feeling is not enough. By itself, it may lead us to suppose that we do our social duty if we support any scheme of reform which appears to have humane and generous aims. Or it may lead us to assume that any programme elaborated by Christians is necessarily a Christian programme. Our so-called Christian programme may be merely a secular programme warmed by the glow of Christian sentiment – or perhaps only illuminated by the chilly light of Christian phrases.

Now, there are certain principles of Christian conduct, of social as well as private morality, laws of right and wrong for people in authority and for people in subordination; laws of right and wrong for governments as well as for individuals. These principles are true for the Christian at all times and in all places and for all peoples. Some of these are set forth in encyclical letters of Leo XIII and Pius XI which are essential texts for Christian social thinkers of all denominations.[4] It has often been observed, however, that principles of such universal validity usually tell us more clearly what is wrong than how to put it right. This is in the nature of things. There is a much greater measure of agreement among Christian social thinkers of different nations than you would expect to find; and if any people was prepared to take seriously what such men have said, it would lead to very profound social changes. But just as every one of us has to make his own decisions in his private life, so each nation has to make its own: and what is good for one is not always good for another. Even apart from human frailty, we cannot expect individuals or nations who are different to behave in exactly the same way: we must respect their differences as well as their likeness to each other as sons of God. But there is another problem about social reform, which we must keep always in mind. Co-operation between Christians and non-Christians is not only possible, it is necessary. But here is where our Christian thinking comes in: we must try to be clear what it is that we are co-operating for, and just where our difference matters and where it does not. We must not confuse the absolute with the relative good: we must remember that we hold a different view of human nature from the non-Christian, and that we have a different conception of the destiny of man. We must co-operate but not surrender. We must remind ourselves that there is no short cut to a Christian Britain.[5]

This leads me to my last point. I have spoken of our duty to God, our duty to our neighbours, and our duty towards ourselves. There is also our duty towards Nature, but for my present purpose that can be comprehended in our duty towards God. I have said that we cannot perform one of these duties properly without performing the others. If our effort is one-sided, we may, on the one hand, succeed in increasing the number of Christians in Britain, and on the other we may create a Britain in which it is more possible for people to be Christian. But a Christian Britain needs more than that. And even if we set ourselves to perform all our Christian duty, there is still something lacking from our picture. I have so far spoken only of the aspect of human will, and certainly unless we seek we shall not find. But we must not forget God, without whom we can do nothing of worth, but with whom we can do everything. It is impossible to make a blue-print of a Christian order, because we cannot fit God into a blue-print. An earlier speaker has reminded us of the failure of modern man to make a success of his world without God:[6] the converse is to remind ourselves of what we might do in reliance upon His sustaining power and in seeking to learn His will. Human effort alone can only produce a lifeless observance of rules of individual and communal devotion, and in society a Christian framework without a Christian content. We must be sure that we are relying on God, and not merely clothing still one more ambitious human scheme in the vestments of Christianity. Without humility, submission, and love nothing is possible. Our ambition to create a Christian Britain is the greatest we can take to ourselves. Because of its greatness, we know that it is beyond our power as human beings, and this knowledge should bring not discouragement but a greater hope. A Christian Britain implies not merely converts, but the conversion of social consciousness. It will appear in the lives of prophets – men who have not merely kept the faith through the dark age, but who have lived through the mind of that dark age, and got beyond it. The Christian prophets are not always recognised in their lives; or they may be stoned, or slain between the temple and the altar: but it is through them that God works to convert the habits of feeling and thinking, of desiring and willing, to which we are all more enslaved than we know.

I will end by saying something of one Christian witness of our own time, of whom you may never have heard. The name of Charles de Foucauld, a French priest who died in North Africa in 1916, is a name not well known in Britain, although his biography by René Bazin has been translated.[7] I wish everyone would read that book, because I cannot, in a brief account of this extraordinary life, give you any conception of its spiritual quality. Foucauld was a man born to wealth and social position; he abandoned a life of pleasure and dissipation, first to travel in the disguise of a humble Jewish trader, with caravans in unexplored and unsubdued territory in French Morocco and Algeria. In constant danger of his life he was able to make notes and surveys which proved of great value to the administration. Then he found a vocation for the religious life, lived for a time among the more austere communities, made a pilgrimage as a mendicant to the Holy Land, and finally, ordained a priest, became a missionary in a solitary African outpost. He qualified himself to give medical aid to the tribesmen. But the point is that he was something more than a good missionary, great as that vocation is. His aim was not primarily to convert by teaching, but to *live* the Christian life, alone among the natives. The people of Islamic countries recognise and venerate holiness whatever the religion of the saint; and the name of Père de Foucauld was revered far and wide not only by his converts, but by fanatical Moslem. Almost by an accident, he was killed at his prayers in 1916 by a marauding band to which his name and reputation were unknown.[8] This is not, as the world judges, a life of striking success. Yet if you read his biography you will, I think, agree that through the mysterious power of holiness, which is the power of God, he achieved something for the world which should make us feel very modest about all our schemes and plans. I think that it is through such men as Foucauld that the reborn Christian consciousness comes; and I think that from the point of view which we should take, there is no higher glory of a Christian empire than that which was here brought into being by a death in the desert.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *The Church Looks Ahead: Broadcast Talks*, ed. J. H. Oldham (London: Faber & Faber, 1941), 106-17; originally published in *The Listener*, 25 (10 Apr 1941), 524-25. TSE's lecture, broadcast 2 Apr 1941, was the last in a series of eight BBC broadcasts on the role of the Anglican Church in the rebuilding of Britain and Europe following World War II. The other speakers were J. H. Oldham (who gave two lectures), Maurice Reckitt, Philip Mairet, Dorothy L. Sayers, Martin D'Arcy, and Victor A. Demant. E. L. Mascall provided an introduction to the Faber volume.

TSE labored over his talk, writing to Mairet on 21 Feb, "I am finding this broadcast fearfully trying, without having any of the stimulus of the hope of satisfying myself or anyone else. I don't think that I have ever taken part in a series with such pretensions to coherence: so the responsibility to the other speakers is most oppressive, especially as there will be no one to wipe up after me." A letter of 20 Mar to Eric Fenn shows that TSE produced at least four drafts and incorporated suggestions from both Fenn and Mairet.

2†. In *Listener*: "To begin with,"

3. TSE alludes to *The Pope's Five Peace-Points: Address (in questo giorno) of Pope Pius XII to the Sacred College of Cardinals on Christmas Eve* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1939); and to "Foundations of Peace: A Christian Basis – Agreement among the Churches," a letter to the editor of the *Times* (21 Dec 1940, 5), signed by Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury; William Temple, Archbishop of York; Arthur Cardinal Hinsley, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster; and Walter H. Armstrong, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. This letter is reprinted in *The Church Looks Ahead* as an appendix (119-22).

In *The Church Looks Ahead*, Oldham describes the interdenominational letter as an effort by the Churches to "give a lead in regard to the social and international problems of our time" (17). The authors endorse the Pope's five points on the requirements of a lasting peace, and they proffer five additional points, addressing inequality of wealth, equality of opportunity, the centrality of the family, the "sense of a Divine vocation" in labor, and respect for the "resources of the earth" (121-22). Oldham conceived the series of radio talks as an attempt to think through the implications of the prelates' letter (18).

4. In 1891, Leo XIII (1810-1903) issued the encyclical *Rerum novarum* ("Of revolutionary change"), which addressed the "rights and duties of capital and labor" toward each other.

Expanding forty years later on this foundational text of Roman Catholic social teaching, Pius XI (1857-1939) explicitly addressed contemporary economic and social issues, including the ethics of both capitalism and socialism, in *Quadragesimo anno* ("In the fortieth year"), issued in 1931.

5. Of his emphasis on the difficulty of achieving a Christian Britain, TSE wrote to John Hayward on 25 Mar 1941: "They think it is too grim: but I think grimness is the thing to give 'em. Let [J. B.] Priestley deal out the fairy gold: people are ready to lap up blood & sweat from Churchill, yet they want to be told that their 'Christian Britain' is just round the corner."

6. Most of the speakers in the broadcast series agree on this point, but TSE may be thinking in particular of Oldham's second lecture, which treats the issue especially directly (*The Church Looks Ahead*, 37-41).

7. *Charles de Foucauld, explorateur du Maroc, ermite au Sahara* (1921), by René François Nicolas Marie Bazin (1853-1932), French novelist and travel writer. This best-selling biography was published in English as *Charles de Foucauld: Hermit and Explorer*, trans. Peter Keelan (1923). TSE first discussed Foucauld in his 1938 Prize Day address to the Truro School, Cornwall, "On Christianity and a Useful Life" (5.625-28).

8. Foucauld was captured on 1 Dec 1916 by a group of Sanusi Bedouin who came to loot his compound and possibly to kidnap him. He was fatally shot by the fifteen-year-old left to guard him, apparently when gunfire outside startled the boy. In that sense, Foucauld's death was, as TSE claims, almost accidental. The attack against him, however – a foray in an insurrection against French control – was several months in the planning.

Virginia Woolf[1]

Horizon, 3 (May 1941) 313-16

It has only been under peculiar conditions that I have ever been able to interest myself in criticizing – except in the currents of conversation – contemporary writers. In the case of authors whose work one considers pernicious, or whose work has been treated with an uncritical adulation which is pernicious, one figures to oneself occasionally an obligation to denounce or ridicule. In the case of authors whose merits have been ignored or misunderstood there is sometimes a particular obligation of championship. But when an author of unquestionable importance has received due tribute, and is not in the slightest danger of being overlooked or belittled, there is no compulsion to criticize: what chiefly matters is that his writing should be *read*. As soon as one generation has been succeeded by another, the endless labour of revaluations which will be in turn revalued must begin. It is not at the moment when a particular author dies that this work begins, but when a whole generation is gone.

There must, however, be some right point of reference for the moment of death, other than that of the formal obituary which is at best an attempt to say too much in too little space. It seems to me that when a great writer dies – unless he has already long outlived his life – something is in danger of vanishing which is not to reappear in the critical study, the full-length biography, or the anecdotal reminiscences. Perhaps it is something that cannot be preserved or conveyed: but at least we can try to set down some symbols which will serve to remind us in future that there is something lost, if we cannot remember what; and to remind a later generation that there is something they do not know, in spite of all their documents, even if we cannot tell them what. It is something which Virginia Woolf, with all her craft and genius, failed to convey in her life of Roger Fry: and if she failed who, if anyone, should have been successful with a lesser figure, I doubt whether we can do much about her, however we try.[2] It is what someone, I forget who, must have meant when he wandered about saying simply: "Coleridge is dead."[3] I mean that it is neither regret that an author's work has come to an end nor desolation at the loss of a friend, for the former emotion can be expressed, and the latter one keeps to oneself; but the loss of something both more profound and more extensive, a change to the world which is also a damage to oneself.

While this feeling cannot be communicated, the external situation can to some extent be outlined. Any dead author of long ago, an author on whom we feel some peculiarly personal dependence, we know primarily through his work – as he would wish to be known by posterity, for that is what he cared about. But we may also search and snatch eagerly at any anecdote of private life which may give us the feeling for a moment of seeing him as his contemporaries saw him. We may try to put the two together, peering through the obscurity of time for the unity which was both – and coherently – the mind in the masterpiece and the man of daily business, pleasure and anxiety as ourselves: but failing this, we often relapse into stressing the differences between the two pictures. No one can be understood: but between a great artist of the past and a contemporary whom one has known as a friend there is the difference between a mystery which baffles and a mystery which is accepted. We cannot explain, but we accept and in a way understand. It is this, I think, that disappears completely.

The future will arrive at a permanent estimate of the place of Virginia Woolf's novels in the history of English literature, and it will also be furnished with enough documents to understand what her work meant to her contemporaries. It will also, through letters and memoirs, have more than fugitive glimpses of her personality. Certainly, without her eminence as a writer, and her eminence as the particular kind of writer she was, she would not have occupied the personal position she held among contemporaries; but she would not have held it by being a writer alone – in the latter case it would only be the cessation of work which would here give cause for lament. By attempting to enumerate the qualities and conditions which contributed, one may give at first a false impression of "accidental advantages" concurring to reinforce the imaginative genius and the sense of style which cannot be contested, to turn her into the symbol, almost myth, which she became for those who did not know her, and the social centre which she was for those who did. Some of these advantages may have helped to smooth the path to fame – though when a literary reputation is once established, people quickly forget how long it was in growing – but that fame itself is solidly enough built upon the writings. And these qualities of personal charm and distinction, of kindness and wit, of curiosity about human beings, and the particular advantage of a kind of hereditary position in English letters (with the incidental benefits which that position bestowed) do not, when enumerated, tell the whole story: they combined to form a whole which is more than the sum of the parts.

I am well aware that the literary-social importance which Virginia Woolf enjoyed, had its nucleus in a society which those people whose ideas about it were vague – vague even in connection with the topography of London – were wont, not always disinterestedly perhaps, to deride. The sufficient answer *ad hoc* – though not the final answer – would probably be that it was the only one there was: and as I believe that without Virginia Woolf at the centre of it, it would have remained formless or marginal, to call attention to its interest to the sociologist is not irrelevant to my subject. Any group will appear more uniform, and probably more intolerant and exclusive from the outside than it really is; and here, certainly, no subscription of orthodoxy was imposed. Had it indeed, been a matter of limited membership and exclusive doctrine, it would not have attracted the exasperated attention of those who objected to it on these supposed grounds. It is no part of my purpose here either to defend, criticize or appraise *élites*; I only mention the matter in order to make the point that Virginia Woolf was the centre, not merely of an esoteric group, but of the literary life of London.[4] Her position was due to a concurrence of qualities and circumstances which never happened before, and which I do not think will ever happen again. It maintained the dignified and admirable tradition of Victorian upper middle-class culture – a situation in which the artist was neither the servant of the exalted patron, the parasite of the plutocrat, nor the entertainer of the mob – a situation in which the producer and the consumer of art were on an equal footing, and that neither the highest nor the lowest. With the death of Virginia Woolf, a whole pattern of culture is broken: she may be, from one point of view, only the symbol of it; but she would not be the symbol if she had not been, more than anyone in her time, the maintainer of it. Her work will remain; something of her personality will be recorded: but how can her position in the life of her own time be understood by those to whom her time will be so remote that they will not even know how far they fail to understand it? As for us – *l'on sait ce que l'on perd. On ne sait jamais ce que l'on rattrapera.*[5]

NOTES

1. Suffering from depression, Woolf drowned herself in the River Ouse on 28 Mar 1941. TSE wrote Leonard Woolf on 4 Apr: "I only learned the news yesterday afternoon when I was in London, having had no previous intimation. For myself and others it is the end of a world." On

21 Apr, he complained to John Hayward that he was experiencing a "general debility": "It is very hard to regain strength in these times; and the events in the Mediterranean, the bombing of London, and Virginia's death have combined to depress me – the last more perhaps than I was aware of at the time. I was immediately hounded by the brisk Theodora Bosanquet to do an article for *Time and Tide*. I managed to evade that, but I have had to do a note for *Horizon*. At least, the only sort of thing I want to say at the moment can better be said in *Horizon* than in *T & T*. But I had rather not say anything." He told Enid Faber on 27 Apr that he had "toiled over" his note, "simply because I thought it might be thought odd if I didn't write something: but I doubt whether it will please anybody. I don't know very much about her writing: she was a personal friend who seemed to me (*mutatis* considerably *mutandis*) like a member of my own family; and I miss her dreadfully, but I don't see her exactly as her relatives see her, and my admiration for the ideas of her *milieu* – now rather old-fashioned – is decidedly qualified."

2. *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940). In her diary, Woolf herself anticipated this particular criticism (28 July 1940), which she suspected was her husband's unspoken opinion, and which she feared – needlessly, as it turned out – would be articulated in Desmond MacCarthy's forthcoming review of the book.

3. Multiple sources record that Charles Lamb repeated this phrase frequently between Coleridge's death in July 1834 and his own five months later. The image of Lamb "wandering about" as he said it, however, seems to be an embellishment of TSE's.

4. In his 21 Apr letter to Hayward, TSE wrote of Woolf: "a kind of pin has gone which held a lot of people together, and gave their belonging together a pattern and a meaning which has gone. They now become only separate individuals, whom one likes more or less, but with whom in future probably one will be more conscious of alienation than of congeniality. It is no doubt this, as well as the disappearance of a person, which has thrown me into a mood of social isolation, with the prospect of becoming a ghost in an alien, plebeian and formless society."

5. *Trans:* "We know what we have lost; we never know what we will get in its place." Charles Péguy, *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, 8 (2 Dec 1906), 65; *read*: "On sait ce que l'on perd."

On 10 May 1941, TSE sent Leonard Woolf the proof of his comments, explaining that *Horizon* had failed to incorporate a number of changes he had requested: "I should like you to see what I actually intended to appear. The fact that they are printing the uncorrected version is due, so far as I can discover, entirely to carelessness or confusion in their own office." He added:

> I only hope that the shades of difference indicated by my alterations will be too fine to matter for the general public. But they are important to me: because in my consciousness that this was not the occasion either for a critique of Virginia's work or for the expression of personal feeling, and in endeavouring to imply both without stating them, I feared that I might produce a different effect from that intended. There is incidentally a kind of pomposity in the uncorrected text which is abhorrent. I had rather such a misfortune befell anything I wrote rather than this: and there is nothing to be done about it afterwards.

Sir Hugh Walpole[1]

The Times (6 June 1941) 7

One trait of Sir Hugh Walpole, of which, I hope, posterity will not be left in ignorance, was a capacity to appreciate and admire generously the work of authors very different from himself. He held in the highest esteem, for instance, the novels of Mr. James Joyce and Mrs. Woolf.[2] That he was quick to appreciate the work of younger men, and ready to help and testify to his belief in their future, is equally certain.[3] These qualities, combined with his personal charm and unassuming manners, have, I feel sure, given him the affection of many writers with whom the public may not suppose him to have been associated.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Walpole died of heart failure on 1 June 1941. The obituary that appeared in the *Times* the next day offered faint and mixed praise: "He was a born novelist, and set many of his stories in Lakeland; he had a versatile imagination; he could tell a workmanlike story in good workmanlike English; and he was a man of immense industry, conscientious, and painstaking. . . . It would not be unjust to describe Walpole as a sentimental egotist. It cannot be denied that he was not popular among his fellow-writers, and he was singularly sensitive to adverse criticism" (6).

In "appreciations" of Walpole published on 4 June, Sir Kenneth Clark and J. B. Priestley took issue with the obituary (7). Two days later, TSE's remarks appeared as the second of five further comments. Among the others, Sir John Pollock defended the obituary, while E. H. W. Meyerstein added an unflattering anecdote. Athene Seyler and the Rev. H. K. Luce, however, joined TSE (and Priestley) in noting Walpole's generosity. Ending the exchange, Alan Bott wrote scathingly on 11 June to refute Pollock.

The *Times* on 11 June lists TSE among the mourners at the memorial service held for Walpole the previous day at St. Margaret's in Westminster (7).

2. Woolf had been a personal friend of Walpole's since 1928, and he considered her a genius. His connection with Joyce is more tenuous, but he did praise *Ulysses* to his acquaintances – incurring the wrath, on one occasion, of the vehemently anti-Joycean Alfred Noyes.

3. Walpole's kindnesses to TSE himself in the uncertain fledgling years of the *Criterion* are documented in TSE's letters of 1923-25. But TSE may be thinking particularly of the effusive letter of recommendation Walpole wrote for the directors of Faber & Gwyer in 1925, extolling TSE's editorial "gifts" and testifying to his belief in his future: "I venture to think that if Mr. Eliot

had editorial control of a literary monthly that had sufficient money behind it to allow of some enterprise and adventure we should have one of the most remarkable periodicals that English letters have yet seen" (*L2* 622). TSE wrote gratefully to Walpole on 4 Feb: "Your letter is *absolutely perfect* for my purposes. It is so fine that I could hardly believe it was about myself. . . . *Thank you again with all my heart*" (*L2* 584).

Views and Reviews: Basic Revelation

A review of *The New Testament in Basic English*, trans. S. H. Hooke et al.

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1941. Pp. vi + 548.

The New English Weekly, 19 (26 June 1941) 101-02

The preparation of the New Testament in Basic English has been a task occupying the same length of time as the Trojan War. We are told that "a committee directed by Professor S. H. Hooke, Professor of Old Testament Studies in the University of London, has prepared in the last ten years a new translation from the original sources, incorporating the results of the most recent work on the problems of biblical translation. The text so prepared was subsequently revised by a committee of Cambridge scholars appointed by the Syndics of the University Press."[1] A task on which so much labour has been spent must have some very serious justification; and the first question we must ask is what this book is *for*.

This question is not the question of the value of Basic English.[2] That there are at least two ways in which this remarkable invention can be of use I have no doubt. It provides a means of communication, a systematic lingua franca, with foreigners who have not the opportunity to master English; and in the hands of suitable teachers it provides a valuable discipline in the teaching of the use of the English language to English pupils. Whether it is the best introduction to the language for foreigners who wish to proceed to an understanding of its finer shades of expression, is a question upon which I have no opinion, but which should be answerable by experience; and at what age and in what way English-born students should acquire it, is another question also. The question at issue is that of the value of a Basic New Testament. I am somewhat puzzled by the claims made for it by its publishers.

This New Testament has as one of its purposes to meet the needs of foreigners. "The Basic translation," says the circular, "is intended to bring the English Bible, in a form they can understand, to the many potential new readers who know only a little English." But the "English Bible" is the King James version, or at least the Revised Translation, and this New

Testament is neither of these, but a “new translation.” I do not suppose that the Bible has been translated into *every* foreign language: but for those into which it has been properly translated, and for the purpose of instruction in the Christian Faith, one cannot help wondering whether the natives cannot learn better through their own language, than from a translation into a simplified, and therefore only approximate form of another foreign language? Why should they be given the *English* Bible? And for literary purposes, why not a Basic Shakespeare, Milton or Shelley?

This New Testament, however, is not apparently designed only for foreigners. It is a “new translation,” and it is “an attempt to meet the special needs of to-day.” I am not one of those who hold that the Authorised (or Revised) version is all that we need.[3] Anyone who has studied the admirable Warre Cornish translation of St. Paul will have found it invaluable: much that is dark in the familiar text becomes more intelligible in a translation into good modern English.[4] But the Warre Cornish version is not Basic, but complete English. One wonders what are “the special needs of to-day,” or, as a later page of the circular says, “the special needs of the twentieth century,” which make it desirable that English-speaking people should be able to read the Bible in a vocabulary of 1,000 words: a vocabulary in which verbs – the parts of speech in the variety and precision of which the excellence of a style is most manifest – are reduced to sixteen. I accept the contention put forward that Basic English offers for English-speaking people “a valuable corrective to loose and ambiguous phraseology and a check on the devices of rhetoric that hide the plain sense of what is being said.” But while Basic English is unlikely to let a writer go as far wrong as when he has 50,000 words or so to play with, it is liable to teach us to be content with the approximation rather than to strive (as Sentimental Tommy did in an instructive passage) for the exact word.[5]

When one compares a passage with the Authorised Version and with the Greek text, one is certainly struck by the brilliance of the tour de force. Something of the beauty of the former is preserved, and most of the sense of the latter is conveyed. But one is constantly disturbed by some skilful paraphrase. 1 Corinthians 13, 1-13, is used as an illustration. “If I have a prophet’s power” has less meaning than “though I have the gift of prophecy,” though “prophet’s power” will do for προφητεία.[6] But “have knowledge of all secret things” does not seem equivalent to either “understand all mysteries” or εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν: if people think that they are getting all the significance of μυστήρια or γνῶσις they are mistaken.[7] I believe that it is better, too, to continue to translate *ἀγάπη* as "charity"; because we have not in English two words to distinguish *ἀγάπη* from ἔρως.[8] And is "love is never tired of waiting" equivalent either to μακροθυμεῖ or "charity suffereth long"?[9] The usual translation "I understood as a child" conveys the meaning of ἐφρόνουν; but "I had a child's thoughts" is ambiguous: for although it may be taken to mean what the Greek appears to mean, it may also mean "I thought about the things which a child thinks about," which is not the same thing at all.[10]

The translation, as I have said, is a brilliant piece of work. But I am quite unable to judge its value without having more clearly put before me what purpose it is intended to serve.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The probable source of this quotation is the circular to which TSE alludes later in his review. A substantially similar pair of sentences appears in the book itself (v). The lead translator, Samuel Henry Hooke (1874-1968), was a scholar of comparative religion.

2. A simplified form of English developed in 1930 by Charles Kay Ogden, Basic English was promoted as an international language and pedagogical tool by I. A. Richards, among others.

3. The Revised Version (1881-85) is a modernized and corrected adaptation of the KJV or Authorized Version (1611).

4. Gerald Warre Cornish, *St. Paul from the Trenches: A Rendering of the Epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians Done in France during the Great War* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1937).

5. J. M. Barrie, *Sentimental Tommy: The Story of His Boyhood* (1896). In the book's climactic chapter, a tenacious quest for *le mot juste* leads Tommy to fail a bursary examination: "He had wanted a Scotch word that would signify how many people were in church, and it was on the tip of his tongue but would come no farther. . . . The hour had gone by just like winking; he had forgotten all about time while searching his mind for the word" (461). Too late, Tommy – who has rejected "puckle," "manzy," "mask," "flow," and "curran" as inexact – realizes that the word he has been searching for is "hantle." But his struggle presages his eventual success as a writer.

6. In the KJV, 1 Corinthians 13:2 reads, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." The same verse in the translation under review reads, "And if I have a prophet's power, and have knowledge of all secret things; and if I have all faith, by which mountains may be moved from their place, but have not love, I am nothing" (364).

7. *μυστήρια* (mystiria) and *γνῶσις* (gnosis) are the words translated in the KJV as "mysteries" and "knowledge."

8. Agape (*ἀγάπη*) – universal or divine love – as distinguished from Eros (ἔρως).

9. In the KJV: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (1 Corinthians 13:4). In the Basic English translation: "Love is never tired of waiting; love is kind; love has no envy; love has no high opinion of itself, love has no pride" (364).

10. In the KJV: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). In the Basic English translation: "When I was a child, I made use of a child's language, I had a child's feelings and a child's thoughts: now that I am a man, I have put away the things of a child" (365).

An Issue of *The Christian News-Letter*[1]

The Christian News-Letter, 97 (3 Sept 1941) [1-4]

Dear Member,

The writer of the previous number of this News-Letter introduced herself in terms of apology which will serve at least equally well for the present writer: I shall therefore not attempt to amplify or vary what she said in her first paragraph, but accept it as an introduction for myself also.[2]

THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF FRANCE

We know little of the situation in either occupied or unoccupied France; and those of us who have French friends receive no news, or hardly more than that they are still alive. Our public preoccupation, also, is with the foreign policy of the Vichy government and its immediate consequences for us. Yet it is of very great importance, in the long run, that we should take every opportunity of informing ourselves about the domestic policy of that government, and of the changes taking place inside France. For the problem of France will be one of the most vital and difficult of all the post-war problems; and we need to remind ourselves that the France which we shall have to get to know – after a period of isolation of the two countries from each other for which there is no parallel in history – may be different from the France which we knew up to fifteen months ago. For that reconstruction of understanding which will be essential, we shall need all our powers of imagination, sympathy and tolerance; and also all the information about the steps in France's development that we can meanwhile obtain. The article in *The Times* of August 14th, therefore, meagre as it is, deserves our careful attention.[3]

As for the abolition of political parties, we know well that there were formerly far too many for parliamentary government to be anything but a tedious farce; and we know how prevalent was political corruption and venality. As for the abolition of Free Masonry, we must remember that the Grand Orient was a very different affair from Free Masonry as known in Britain – I have always understood that relations between the two bodies were broken off long ago.[4] On the other hand, the abolition of secret societies seems to have come rather late, for it arouses our recollection of the fact that some of the most dangerous of these, in the years before the war, were freely said to have been abetted and subsidised by Germany, if not even created by German machinations. What gives us the gravest anxiety, is the statement (in *The Times* article cited) that "Jews have been given a special status, based on the laws of Nuremberg, which makes their condition little better than that of bondsmen" [5].[5] Anti-semitism there has always been, among the parties of the extreme Right: but it was a very different thing, as a symptom of the disorder of French society and politics for the last hundred and fifty years, from what it is when it takes its place as a principle of reconstruction. If this is what is happening, we can only hope that there has been, or that there will be, some organised protest against such injustice, by the French ecclesiastical hierarchy: unless we are also optimistic enough to hope that these measures are only taken under the strongest pressure from Germany, and that no French government, once that government was master in its own house, would enforce such measures or keep them on its statutes. But unless the French Church, and the Protestant bodies in France rise to protest, we must feel serious doubts about the way in which the revival of Christian France, advertised from Vichy, is to be carried out.[6]

In Spain – a country which I do not know – it may be that the vast majority of the population, however anti-clerical, is Christian and Catholic at heart. France has had a very different story. We may deplore the French Revolution, but we must accept it as a fact. In no European country is the gulf between the Christian and the non-Christian more acute; a large part of the population is the product of four generations of apostasy, and is therefore not to be Christianized over night or made to conform to behaviour the principles of which it denies. What four generations have destroyed cannot in one generation be recreated; and the unity which France so sorely needs will not be achieved by oppression.

The words which I have used will, I hope, come with more force from one who has never been an admirer of Republican government in France. The device *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* is only the memorial of the time of revolution: *Famille, Travail, Patrie* has more permanent value.[7] But to substitute the second for the first is to go further than merely to call attention to equal, or even to higher values: it is by implication the denial and repudiation of the first. It suggests the danger of a reaction which might be as bad, or worse than that from which it reacts. To have affirmed Liberty, Equality, Fraternity in that way was, I think, unfortunate: but to repudiate them in this way is at least an equal error. Every country needs a strong government; it is probable that France in her present condition can only be ruled by an autocratic government; but at no time can an autocratic government be good for France unless it has the wisdom and prescience to recognise limits to autocracy. No one who knows and loves France can wish to see her revert to the condition of the twenty years between the wars: but reactionary excesses might foment a counter-reaction to a condition equally deplorable.

I am not suggesting that we have enough information yet to judge the domestic and cultural policy of the present government of unoccupied France: we have merely enough to be apprehensive, and to make it imperative for us to follow the progress of this policy as well as conditions of communication permit. It is especially important that the Christian public here should concern itself with the methods of a government which professes Christianity, and which proclaims the ideal of a Christian France. For we have the same ideal for Britain, and can surely profit by studying the success or failure of other methods than our own.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

The Editor has already called attention (in No. 94) to the statement *Why Christian Education Matters* and has made some comment on it.[8] I believe, however, that the questions I have just raised provide a context in which some fresh issues may be raised. When any reform is proposed, it is only common sense to consider its possible risks. The zeal of those who favour any particular change may lead them to confuse a proper caution with wilful obstruction or destructive scepticism, and to be impatient with those who point out dangers. I hope that no such conclusion will be drawn in the present instance. The goal, a Christian Britain, is our common goal, and if we are apprehensive of methods to be employed in France, we should none the less be critical of our own. The question which I wish to put is one which I raise in the interests of every denomination. It is recognised that except in denominational schools (the problems of which do not come within the scope of the proposals) the religious instructions must be confined to what all, or at least the best recognised, Christian groups can accept. Before we give *carte blanche* to the educational authorities to introduce into schools a new syllabus of "religious knowledge" [2] – and I take it that this term includes something more dogmatic than a knowledge of religious history or of those principles of morals upon which all Christians agree, important as these departments are – we might consider how this teaching is to be completed by the specific instruction which will make the child not merely a "Christian" in the abstract, but a member of the Church of Rome, the Church of England or that of Scotland, a Methodist, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, or a member of some other communion. For unless we can effect this conjunction there is a danger of producing a generation of so-called Christians with no particular church connexions at all. By comparison with the present situation, and with the tendencies of our time, this possibility may appear the reverse of a calamity; and no one would be so uncharitable as to deny that an individual with no church connexion can yet be, in a sense, a Christian. But if you have a nation, or a vast majority, of such persons, the results might be as disastrous as apostasy.

For we owe an obligation, each of us to our particular church, to preserve its doctrine entire and undefiled: an obligation no less serious than our obligation to bring light to those who walk in darkness and who have, in effect, no opportunity of knowing enough about the Christian Faith even to reject it. That the moderate measures proposed should be put into effect seems highly desirable: but let us not pretend, or allow it to be believed, that they are sufficient to provide a "truly Christian Britain." What we have to guard against is that such reforms should result in a kind of National Christianity, the vagaries of which would be free from the control of any theological authority. Nor are we always aware that our modest efforts may be regarded with suspicion, and our lack of clarity of thought be imputed as disingenuousness – as the attempt of a dominant section of society to confirm its domination. For some of the recommendations made in the leaflet seem oddly inadequate to the implications of the statement (which I believe to be true) made in the conclusion: "For the Christian there is no choice. Education is from top to bottom religious, or it is not education" [3].

CHRISTIAN AND NATURAL VIRTUES

It is often in my mind that we may tend to make the Christian compromise with the world – for some compromise must be made – on the wrong ground. We may go too far on the assumption that a little Christianity all round is more important than the full Christian life on the part of a few – as if the operation of the leaven on the lump could be performed once for all, after which we would have no need for leaven. It is not irrelevant or without significance, I think, that there are signs of a similar attitude with regard to culture and the arts: that a degree of refinement of manners and sensibility which cannot be attained by all, is taken to be superfluous and anti-social; and that works of art which cannot be enjoyed by all are to be condemned – even though there is evidence that popular art is continually fertilised and revivified from above. (I would instance poster art and the recent *Fantasia* of Mr. Disney.[9]) This form of egalitarianism would be destructive of either culture or Christianity. Full Christian virtue cannot exist without full Christian belief: but there is natural virtue about which Christian and non-Christian can agree.

That natural virtue should be presented as Christian virtue has unfortunate consequences in both directions. On the one hand the specifically Christian virtues get overlooked; and on the other hand, when standards of behaviour which should be accepted by all are put forward as Christian, they may appear to those who are not Christians to have no application to themselves. This country, like some others, has suffered grievously already by the decline of Christian belief and conduct: but, looking back at the twenty years between wars, one is inclined to assert that there were lapses, not only of Christianity, but of common social and personal virtues without which no society, Christian or not, can survive. There is, for instance, nothing particularly Christian about the capacity for responsible leadership in public life.

Amongst the natural virtues the place of which has not been settled I should include *patriotism*. I speak of it as being fundamentally a virtue, though obviously it can easily pass into the vices of nationalism, imperialism in the bad sense, collective pride and collective cupidity: it can, furthermore, be a cloak for individual or sectional selfishness. These associations are so patent that the word itself seems to have, for many people, attached to itself suspicion and odium – though the adjective "unpatriotic" has never, so far as I know, acquired any but a strongly condemnatory meaning. There is another reason why we are shy of the word, in this country, and that is a question of good manners: we feel it to be a quality which is better taken for granted, and not talked about – though this particular reticence may be partly the outcome of more than a century of success and security. Yet it is a permanent feeling, which for better as well as worse cannot be exorcised: to ignore it, in our schemes for the federation of the world, as well as for our enemies to ignore it in their schemes of domination, is to risk eventual explosions. It includes the attachment to natural as well as to constructed surroundings, to place as well as to people, to the past as well as to the future; the attachment of a people to its own culture, and to its ability to make that specific and voluntary contribution to Christendom and to the world. In his letter of August 20th the Editor referred to Professor Carr's *The Future of Nations* as suggesting that the solution of the problems of nationality can be found in "the recognition of different, but not incompatible loyalties."[10] Patriotism is a loyalty which requires to be balanced by other loyalties. One has, on the personal level, an attachment to people of one's own sort, among other nationalities: if one has them, to foreign friends; if one is a man of science or of art or of scholarship, to one's colleagues in foreign countries. There is the wider loyalty to justice. And finally, there is for the Christian the greatest and most binding of loyalties, which, like the loyalty to justice but with still greater authority, can bring him into conflict with the conception of patriotism prevailing at the moment. But higher loyalty does not supersede patriotism, but refines it: and the patriotism of a Christian should be something finer than that of a non-Christian, yet remain a common virtue shared with him. To speak of this subject at all, at a time when so much heroic self-sacrifice has manifested itself, may seem at first an impertinence; but I am not exhorting people to be more patriotic, but suggesting that we might think about the place of patriotism in the Christian life.

APOLOGY

It is a great temptation, to anyone called in to write the *Christian News-Letter* (I would not say to "edit" it) for one week, to produce what is really a Supplement and pretend that it is a Letter.[11] But I had no "news" upon which I felt myself especially qualified to pronounce: and if this contribution differs from a Supplement only in being more loosely constructed, and following my own train of thought from one subject to another, I can only say that I have anticipated this particular criticism.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The text of this entire issue was written by TSE as guest editor. J. H. Oldham normally produced the *CN-L* weekly, but he relied on friends such as TSE to stand in for him from time to time.

2. With Oldham beginning a four-week vacation, the *CN-L* of 27 Aug 1941 was edited by the English writer, academic, and social activist Mary Danvers Stocks (1891-1975), who was then principal of Westfield College. The paragraph that TSE here endorses asks readers not to blame Oldham "for anything that may be said in this issue, nor to attribute to him any opinions which may be expressed in it. You can, of course, blame him for selecting so poor a substitute. From such just censure I will not attempt to shield him" [1].

3. "A 'New Order' For France: The Vichy Substitute for Democracy," attributed to "A French Correspondent," sketches Marshal Pétain's political philosophy and policies (5).

4. A schism between the United Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Orient de France developed when the latter began admitting atheists in 1877. The Grand Orient also rejected the apoliticism of traditional Freemasonry and was generally (though not officially) associated with French Republicanism and the Left.

5. Enacted in 1935, the Nuremberg Laws classified Jews as noncitizens, deprived them of political rights, and forbade marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Aryans.

6. *The Times* alludes to Pétain's professed goal of reinstating Catholicism at the center of French cultural and social life.

7. The Vichy regime, as the *Times* reported, had replaced the famous revolutionary and Republican motto ("Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood") with one ("Family, Work, Fatherland") previously adopted by the right-wing group Croix-de-Feu.

8. *Why Christian Education Matters* (London: Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1941), a pamphlet issued by the interdenominational Christian Education Movement, "formed to support the movement for reform in religious education called for by recent statements of the leaders of all the Christian confessions" (3). The pamphlet, endorsed by the archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Wales, and by the moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, supports certain practical reforms recommended by the archbishops in the *Times* of 13 Feb 1941 and urges the formation of advocacy groups "representative of religious and educational interests" (3). Oldham approved and reinforced this manifesto in the *CN-L* of 13 Aug. He also distributed the pamphlet for consideration at the twelfth meeting of The Moot (held 1-3 Aug), in which TSE was a participant.

9. Walt Disney (1901-66), American animator and film producer. His *Fantasia*, which opened in New York 13 Nov 1940 and in London 21 July 1941, sets eight animated sequences to such orchestral classics as Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony, Mussorgsky's *A Night on Bald Mountain*, and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

10. *The Future of Nations: Independence or Interdependence?* (1941), by Edward Hallett Carr (1892-1982), English political scientist, historian, and diplomat. Oldham mentions Carr's book in the *CN-L* of 20 Aug 1941 as one of several bearing on his topic, the future of Europe: it "shows with great clearness . . . that the crucial problem is how to reconcile the sentiment of nationality with the reality of economic interdependence, and that a solution can be found only in the recognition of different, but not incompatible, loyalties, existing side by side, so that people will belong to different groups for different purposes" [3].

11. An issue of the *CN-L* typically includes four pages of news and commentary by the editor and a substantial essay (the "Supplement") contributed by another writer.

Memoir on Irving Babbitt[1]

On the occasion of Irving Babbitt's death, I wrote an editorial note from which I quote the following passage as appropriate to this occasion:

> Those who know Babbitt only through his writings, and have had no contact with him as a teacher and friend, will probably not be able to appreciate the greatness of his work. For he was primarily and always a teacher and a talker. He combined rare charm with great force: so that those who knew him will always remember his foibles with affection, and cherish the memory of his brusqueness when other men's suavity is forgotten. Twenty-four years ago, when I first knew him, his reputation was only amongst a few. He was the author of two books, the first of which I still regard as the more important, *Literature and the American College*, and *The New Laokoon*. He was considered an interesting, eccentric, and rebellious figure amongst the teaching profession; and his outspoken contempt for methods of teaching in vogue had given him a reputation for unpopularity which attracted to him some discerning graduates and undergraduates at Harvard University. Fortunately for his pupils, his classes in those days were small, and could be conducted informally round a small table. For Babbitt, I think, like most great teachers, was at his best with a small group of pupils. Superficially, his lectures were almost without method. He would enter the room with a pile of books, papers, and notes, which he shifted and shuffled throughout the hour; beginning to talk before he sat down, beginning anywhere and ending anywhere, he gave us the impression that a life-time was too short for telling us all that he wanted to say. The lectures which I attended were concerned with French Literary Criticism; but they had a good deal to do with Aristotle, Longinus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; they touched frequently upon Buddhism, Confucius, Rousseau, and contemporary political and religious movements. Somehow or other one read a number of books, Aristotle's *Politics* or La Fontaine's *Fables*, just because Babbitt assumed that any educated man had already read them. What held the lectures or talks together was his intellectual passion, one might say intellectual fury; what made them cohere was the constant recurrence

> of his dominant ideas; what gave them delight was their informality, the demand which they made upon one's mental agility, and the frankness with which he discussed the things which he disliked, and which his pupils came to dislike too.[2]

That paragraph, I think, will still do; and seems appropriate to the present context, though the rest of what I wrote then may not be. In the way of personal reminiscence I have little to add to what can be said better, and in more luminous detail, by those who have had more continuous relations with him. Babbitt's influence was one of the forces that sent me to Paris; and for three years after that I was immersed in the technical philosophy of the time. After many years, I saw him after he had spent a few months lecturing at the Sorbonne. I think it was only the accident of a time-table which led to his returning from a British port, that had brought him to London. The evening that he spent with me, during a very brief sojourn in London, remains a very memorable one; though a poor memory has let slip the details of a conversation that I should have liked to preserve. I know that Babbitt in the role of guest was at his most charming – having that quality of the perfect guest, of being able to be formal and informal at once, combining the best of both attitudes. He had at command a graciousness, a wit, and even a light humor which most of those who knew him only as a public figure never suspected. There was nothing of the ogre known to the conventional academic world, to the world of literary journalism, or to the sluggish pupil. Yet to have been once a pupil of Babbitt's was to remain always in that position, and to be grateful always for (in my case) a very much qualified approval.

The conversation turned upon the direction that Paul More was taking, and anxious though I was to avoid such a painful subject, I found myself obliged to expose and briefly to account for my own position.[3] I imagine that, in view of some of my previous eccentricities in print, this was only a minor shock to him. He took the matter seriously, however, and managed to convince me that it was my duty, in his own words, to "come out into the open." I had not been conscious of skulking, having been more concerned with making up my own mind than with making any public use of it when made. But Babbitt's words gnawed on my conscience, and provoked, for my next volume of essays, a preface that perhaps went to the opposite extreme from that of which I had felt myself accused.[4]

I had looked forward, on a visit of nine months to Harvard in 1932, to engaging Babbitt in some of the perambulatory conversations that his pupils know so well. I saw him only twice, in November; thereafter his illness made communication impossible.

As with some of the authors who have influenced us during the formative period, it is usual, I imagine, to look back upon a great teacher and say: "So-and-so was of immense value to me at that time." I do not believe that any pupil who was ever deeply impressed by Babbitt, can ever speak of him with that mild tenderness one feels towards something one has outgrown or grown out of. If one has once had that relationship with Babbitt, he remains permanently an active influence; his ideas are permanently with one, as a measurement and test of one's own. I cannot imagine anyone coming to react *against* Babbitt. Even in the convictions one may feel, the views one may hold, that seem to contradict most important convictions of Babbitt's own, one is aware that he himself was very largely the cause of them. The magnitude of the debt that some of us owe to him should be more obvious to posterity than to our contemporaries.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Irving Babbitt: Man and Teacher*, ed. Frederick Manchester and Odell Shepard (New York: Putnam, 1941), 101-04. TSE's is the thirteenth of the thirty-nine untitled memoirs comprising this memorial volume; other contributors include Norman Foerster, Austin Warren, Theodore Spencer, John Livingston Lowes, and Paul Elmer More. TSE's contribution was first requested by Odell Shepard in Mar 1935. A year later, in a letter to Willard Connely dated 17 Mar 1936, he expressed doubt that he could "write anything . . . in sufficient time to be of any use to Mr. Shepard"; yet he added, "I should like to ask what character the projected book is to have, and what sort of contribution is desired." On 1 Mar 1937, having completed his memoir, he wrote apologetically to Mrs. Babbitt: "I am, by the way, very conscious that that note is not what I should have liked it to be. I had finally to write it under great pressure."

2. Quoted, with minor alterations, from TSE's Oct 1933 *Criterion* "Commentary" (4.550). Babbitt died on 15 July 1933.

3. More had diverged in the 1920s from Babbitt's secularism, and his writing increasingly focused on Christian apologetics in such works as *Christ the Word* (1927) and *The Catholic Faith* (1931).

4. TSE declares in the preface to *FLA* that the point of view informing his essays is "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (3.513). In "To Criticize the Critic" (1965), he tentatively dates his conversation with Babbitt to 1927, when he had "recently been baptized and confirmed into the Church of England" (*TCC* 15); however, it was in the

summer of 1928, not 1927, that Babbitt traveled to Europe and that TSE prepared *FLA* for publication. And it was in 1923 that Babbitt lectured at the Sorbonne. TSE's memory thus appears to conflate a meeting in 1923 (one perhaps facilitated by "the accident of a time-table") with one in 1928, when Babbitt urged him to "come out into the open."

Greek Literature in Education

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 20 (27 Nov 1941) 52

Sir, – The author of the contribution on "Educational Idealism" in your issue of November 6, in attempting to notice two unrelated publications in the space of three paragraphs, has I think given a false impression of the aims of the President of Corpus Christi (Sir Richard Livingstone) as expressed in his Address to the Classical Association.[1] The question there raised was not whether more children could be taught the Greek language: Sir Richard Livingstone was chiefly concerned with the possibility of conveying some understanding of Greek literature, philosophy and history to those who do not study the language. The real issue is between those who agree with Sir Richard Livingstone that some acquaintance with the intellectual and literary achievements of Greece is an essential element in a liberal education, and those who do not. Your contributor has not revealed his own opinions as to the value of Greek, or the value of a "liberal education": but perhaps his last sentence throws some light upon his attitude. It reads:

> Is it possible even to the President of the Classical Association to believe that the national mind and national policy are or can ever be shaped by the infinitesimal fraction of the privileged few who can be taught the significance of Greek letters and Greek civilisation?

The effect of this question – that is to say, the answer which it tends to provoke – is due to the use of the terms "national policy," "shaped" and "privileged few." Am I mistaken in interpreting this question to imply that those who have studied Greek are not only few but futile, clinging to quasi-social pretensions rather than standing for anything valuable? It is indeed a "privilege" to know even a little Greek; but the term "privileged few" has connotations, of which your contributor can hardly be unaware. If we decontaminate the question from the implication that there is something undemocratic about people who know Greek having any influence because there are so few of them, the answer to the question is simply "Why not?" For if we answer the question as your contributor seems to expect, we are not only affirming that Greek letters and Greek civilisation are insignificant, but denying the value to society of all those values which can only be realized by an "infinitesimal fraction."

T. S. ELIOT

NOTE

1. TSE is responding to "Educational Idealism," in which the contributor "T.I." reviews John Dewey's *Education Today* and Livingstone's *The Classics and National Life* in the *NEW* of 6 Nov 1941. The review complains that the "current interest in educational philosophy and practice" is "rather as a symptom of the sickness of society than as the product of any process of rational thought or analysis" (22). It then dismisses the collection of Dewey's early essays as "incomplete and irrelevant" before rejecting as socially worthless Livingstone's argument for more extensive teaching of classical Greek literature.

The classical scholar Sir Richard Winn Livingstone (1880-1960) was president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and president of the Classical Association; his 1941 presidential address to that society was published as *The Classics and National Life*. Livingstone responded to "T.I." on 20 Nov, suggesting that Greek literature in translation could reach the same proportion of the population as, for instance, Shakespeare or Burke. "If people can read the Bible or Augustine's *Confessions* in translation," he wrote, "they can read Thucydides and Plato in the same way" (44). TSE's letter, according to an editorial note, was received in time for the same issue of 20 Nov but was "unavoidably held over" for a week, presumably due to a lack of space.

The Great Layman

A review of *The Secret of Pascal*, by H. F. Stewart

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1940. Pp. x + 108.

Cambridge Review, 63 (29 Nov 1941) 124

Every student of Pascal in this country must be acquainted with Dr. Stewart's earlier book, *The Holiness of Pascal*.[1] The title of this second small book does not reveal its meaning so clearly; but it is as well that we should be provoked to read the book in order to find out what the secret is. It is, for the purpose of this book, Pascal's style. French critics have analysed and criticised this famous style, but an explanation of it for English readers can best be given by an English critic, and no one is better qualified, first, by his knowledge of theology and erudition in French literature, and, second – what is equally important – by a lifelong devotion to Pascal, than is Dr. Stewart.[2]

The book consists of three chapters: Pascal in Debate, Pascal as Moralist, and Pascal as Poet. The second chapter is not so directly concerned with style as the first and third. We admit, that with Pascal if with anyone, it is impossible to appreciate so ardent a style without some understanding of what he was ardent about; my only criticism of this second chapter – which is perhaps merely a complaint that the book is so brief – is that one would like to see Pascal as moralist set in his proper place in that great French tradition of moralists – a tradition so definite in France as to produce its own *genre* – which begins with Montaigne, which proceeds to La Bruyère and Vauvenargues, which comprehends minor figures like Chamfort and Rivarol, and which is even at the back of a book most agreeably read in a French translation, Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann*.[3] It is true that Dr. Stewart says significantly, in describing the composition of a particular *pensée* in his third chapter, that Pascal "has his Montaigne in hand or in his head" [65], but one would have liked to find a more general statement of the relationship of the two writers.[4]

In the first chapter, Dr. Stewart is, of course, concerned with the *Provinciales*.[5] Whether Pascal was *quite* fair to his antagonists (who certainly were not fair to him), whether he did not sometimes pounce with glee upon the works of the more unlucky exponents of the principles of their order, whether he was not sometimes carried to excess by delight in the exercise of his own prowess, are questions about which I have doubts, but which I have not the learning to resolve: Dr. Stewart, certainly, is convinced of Pascal's rightness. At one point, however, it seems to me that he reprimands Pascal without justification. Pascal has said of the Jesuits: "they have such a good opinion of themselves that they think it useful and almost necessary for the welfare of religion that their credit should spread until all consciences pass into their keeping."[6] If the Jesuits in question thought this, they may have been mistaken, but I fail to see that Pascal's accusation is, as Dr. Stewart takes it to be, an "accusation of personal ambition" [15]. Whether Pascal accused them of personal ambition or not, he does not appear to be doing so in this passage. But in the matter of style, certainly, Dr. Stewart does, in the second chapter, make a very important point in favour of Pascal against the Jesuits. He points out that

> In the first half of the seventeenth century a wave of bad taste swept over France, tainting every branch of intellectual activity; and the Society of Jesus, which might have taken as its second motto *humani nihil a me alienum puto*, did not escape the infection.[7] [30]

The wave of bad taste was not, of course, limited in its motion to France. It rises in Marinism in Italy, sweeps over Catholic Europe, and finally washes the shores of England with the excesses of Benlowes and Cleveland.[8] According to Mario Praz, who has probably read more of the unreadable verse of the 17th century, including much in Latin, than anyone else, the Jesuits did take a hand in this literary movement with more zeal than inspiration.[9] Dr. Stewart's suggestion that Pascal, while combating the casuistry of the Jesuits, was also combating the bad literary taste with which they had associated themselves, strikes me as a valuable one.

But if the secret of Pascal is style, we have still to find the secret of the secret: and this is to be found primarily, as Dr. Stewart makes clear at the beginning, in a passion for exact definition of terms. His adversaries – his scientific adversaries first – failed in this *seriousness* about language. As a preparation for the *Provinciales*, Dr. Stewart says truly, Pascal "knew little or no theology; but he knew an equivocal term when he saw it" [10]. This remark is one that every reader of Pascal should keep in mind. He is not a professional theologian; he is not to be read as a theologian: he is the great layman, the man of the world (*honnête homme*) as well as scientist, whose worldly wisdom rises and consummates itself in spiritual wisdom, and whose spiritual wisdom is very firmly set on a knowledge of the world. His wisdom, like that of many great writers, is more in his writing than in his life: he who, in his *Pensées*, saw the necessary balance of reason and feeling, was, Dr. Stewart reminds us, "extravagant in his thoughts and acts" [38]. It was the extravagance of an intensely passionate man: and his rational powers only pushed his austerity of life and personal relationships to their extreme.

In the third chapter, Dr. Stewart analyses particular *pensées*, examines Pascal's method of composition, the improvements he made in re-writing, and discusses the reasons for his superiority as a writer to Nicole and Arnauld.[10] The comparison of his style, by parallel columns, with that of Descartes, is very illuminating [60-62]. This chapter especially renders a service to English readers more helpful to them than anything of the sort that could be done for them by a French scholar in his own language.

I cannot help hoping that Dr. Stewart will consider rendering one further service to posterity by producing another edition of *The Holiness of Pascal* and *The Secret of Pascal* welded into one book. For Pascal is not simply the writer of a volume of controversial letters and the fragments of an Apology any more than he is merely the physicist. He is primarily the man, and his influence, which those who have experienced it never escape from, is that of an immensely powerful personality. Therefore the different aspects cannot altogether satisfactorily be contemplated separately: and we should like to study them in the one volume which Dr. Stewart might give us.[11]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. H. F. Stewart, *The Holiness of Pascal* (1915). Hugh Fraser Stewart (1863-1948), English theologian and scholar of French literature, was dean of chapel and reader in French at Trinity College, Cambridge. As TSE indicates, he was an especially distinguished *pascalisant*. Stewart and his wife Jessie had motored TSE from Cambridge to Little Gidding for his first visit on 25 May 1936.

2. Despite the generally favorable tone of this review, TSE confided to John Hayward on 21 Apr 1941: "Charles Smyth has asked me to review Stewart's *Pascal* for the *Cambridge Review* (which is, as you know, a journal of University life and thought) but it strikes me as a mediocre work which need not have been written."

3. The French writer Antoine de Rivarol (1753-1801) was known for his epigrams and for his strong reactionary and royalist views. For TSE's high opinion of Goethe's *Conversations with Eckerman*, see "Turgenev" (1.615) and the notes thereunto.

4. *pensée:* "thought." TSE wrote an introduction to a 1931 edition of the *Pensées*, Pascal's important though fragmentary work of Christian apologetics (4.338).

5. *Lettres provinciales* (1656-57), Pascal's intervention in Jansenism's controversy with the Jesuits.

6. From Letter V.

7. Stewart quotes a well-known line from Terence's play *Heauton Timorumenos* (*trans:* "Nothing that is human is foreign to me"). The Jesuits' motto is "Ad majorem Dei gloriam" ("For the greater glory of God").

8. TSE discusses Marinism, the baroque poetic style of Giambattista Marino and his followers, in his sixth Clark Lecture (2.713-18).

9. On this Jesuit influence, see Praz, *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra: John Donne – Richard Crashaw* (1925) and TSE's review of it (2.596).

10. Like Pascal and Arnauld, Pierre Nicole (1625-95) was an influential Jansenist intellectual.

11. Stewart himself describes *The Secret of Pascal* as "a postscript" to *The Holiness of Pascal* (ix). He never did publish a combined volume such as TSE envisions here, however.

Outline for “Notes towards a Definition of Culture”

This outline constitutes TSE’s earliest work on the essays that were to become *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948). On 21 June 1941 TSE told Maurice Reckitt that Faber was “decidedly interested” in a collection of essays Reckitt had proposed (eventually titled *Prospect for Christendom*); he added, “I should very much like to be in it, and the topic you offer me is the right one, I think.” He warned Reckitt, however, that his summer was committed to his editorial work on *A Choice of Kipling’s Verse* (6.210), and on 20 Aug he wrote: “I am afraid that it would be impossible for me to give the necessary time to elaborating an outline before October. I am very sorry about this but really the synopsis of a chapter takes almost as much time as writing the chapter and is really the hardest part of the work.” A letter of 13 Oct to Theodora Bosanquet indicates that TSE turned to this new project in mid-October.

TSE enclosed a copy of his outline with a letter to Mary Trevelyan postmarked 26 Nov 1941, although his extant letters to her, including the one dated 25 Nov, make no mention of it. The unsigned two-page typescript (Houghton: bMS Am 1691.2 [226]) is erroneously dated 28 Nov.

“Notes towards a Definition of Culture,” the paper TSE drafted for Reckitt in early 1942, draws significantly on the outline but does not follow its sequence closely. Ideas and language from the outline turn up in the many related pieces on “culture” written in the mid-1940s. These include “Cultural Forces in the Human Order,” the essay TSE finally gave Reckitt after withdrawing “Notes”; the latter was ultimately published in the *New English Weekly* (see 6.354, n.1). Some important correspondences between the outline and the essays to follow are identified below in the annotations, which do not, however, attempt to be exhaustive.

Why informal treatment desirable.

Prospects for culture not good, either in the old order or in any new one. We must try to keep our enquiry clear of political convictions, all of which are irrelevant. Our politics and economics are on the plane of planning, whereas culture is on the plane of growth. While we must assume that something can be done about culture, and there is a place for planning, the difference between politics and culture is something like that between planning in an engineering works and planning in agriculture.[1]

What I mean by culture. No “culture” without a culture.[2] It is not something possessed by a privileged class, but on the other hand not something shared equally by all (mass culture). It must be something which a particular people shares altogether, before it can be developed by a small or specialised group. It includes the practice of the arts, and a society which knows how to use and enjoy the arts, and intuitive perception of good and bad on the part of many, and a more conscious discrimination on the part of a few. The life of the arts is therefore involved with the whole business of living, with manners and customs, and ultimately with religion.

Effects of modern society which are not politically curable.[3] The development of science has had an effect upon language. The languages of those peoples which have done most in science, notably English, German and French, tend to become the only languages in which scientific thinking can be carried on (e.g., English vs. Welsh).[4] Poetry the last stronghold of a language in its particularity: at the very best, there must be a good deal of waste involved in a man's writing poetry in a language not native to him. But what is the future of the poetic languages (e.g., the Celtic). The pressure in the modern world to write in a language which will provide the maximum number of appreciative readers. The ideal of science is an abstract language of symbols – symptom, logical positivism.

In politics we tend to sympathise with nationalism or with internationalism. But both bad for culture.[5]

Nationalism tends to sterilise culture by inbreeding. Effect in Italy and Germany, probably Spain also, in my time. Modern cultures need communication and opportunities for cross-fertilisation. Fear of foreign influence on culture a sign of weakness.

Internationalism tends to sterilise culture by detaching it from the soil, by avoidance of what is local, and by consciousness of class rather than race.

There are two bad effects of modern life on culture which are not politically curable. The first is

Concentration of culture, or rather shinkage of culture, into the culture of a small class or group. What has happened and [what] we have seen happening. It is supposed to be now remote from the proletariat, but what is now happening is that it is becoming remote from the bourgeoisie also (including the aristocracy).[6] The attitude for instance of *The Times* significant: attacks modern literature in the name of "the common man," the *Times* "common man" meaning the upper middle class. The charge is perfectly true: but the point is that the fault is not that of a perverse little set of writers. What the facts indicate is a disintegration of society which is only reflected in literature.[7]

The reaction against this specialised culture does not mend matters. It produces something equally unreal. It may lead to an artificial "popular" culture, or it may lead, as in Germany, to a contempt for all culture (in this mistaken sense).

The second bad effect is the concentration of this abstracted "culture" in a few particular dominant centres, such as London, to some extent New York, formerly Paris, and in future, if the Germans have their way, Berlin.[8] This is a very different thing from the influence of Italy in the Renaissance: the Italians of that time did not want to export their culture, it was the other peoples of Europe who wanted to import it, and they were stimulated by it to advance their own. The modern situation is more that of an imposition of culture; it is like the exhaustion of the soil by artificial fertilisers for quick results; and the tendency is to kill native cultures rather than to increase their fertility.[9] British education in India: decline of Sanskrit.[10]

Some of the problems of culture have religious analogies: such as development of nationalistic religion in Japan. We must remember that we cannot aim to keep the domains of politics, culture and religion quite distinct. They all develop in particular soils, and become inextricably intertwined: this is healthy and right in each place, so long as contacts – necessary for self-criticism – are maintained. But when we come to export, we are apt to export culture instead of religion and politics instead of culture.[11] Yet the problem of culture is at bottom a religious one, only it is the problem of a universal religion in a particular place.[12]

NOTES

1. TSE takes up this analogy in his 1945 lecture "Cultural Diversity and European Unity," writing, "politics and economics can be managed by the intellect in a way which culture cannot; or, one could say that politics and economics are concerned primarily with social engineering, and culture primarily with growth" (6.627). In his 1946 series of radio broadcasts to Germany,

Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur, he argues: "I am not here criticising any schemes for world organisation. Such schemes belong to the plane of engineering, of devising machinery. Machinery is necessary, and the more perfect the machine the better. But culture is something that must grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time" (6.716).

2. Although the idea summarized in this phrase is fundamental to all of TSE's writings on culture, the phrase appears only in "Notes towards a Definition of Culture": "These two meanings, that of the culture of a class and that of the culture of a whole people, have to be kept distinct but always in relation. For it is a part of my thesis that there is no 'culture' without 'a culture,' and no culture of a class or of an individual unless there is a living culture in the people to which that class or individual belongs" (6.343).

3. TSE writes in "Notes": "If a conflict between modern civilisation and true culture exists, this is not a merely political malady, and is therefore beyond a merely political cure" (6.346). His suspicion of the view that culture can be managed bureaucratically resurfaces frequently, from his 1944 article "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe" (6.519) to his skeptical response to the founding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1945: "The first task of a cultural organization should be to consider how far 'culture' is susceptible of 'organization'" (6.696).

4. This point is developed in "Cultural Diversity and European Unity": "Welsh is not of use, even to Welshmen, for every purpose. A Welsh scientist, for instance, must work and think in English, simply because there has been a tradition of scientific thinking in English which has made that language a better vehicle for scientific thought" (6.633).

5. TSE makes this argument in "Notes": "Indeed, both nationalism and internationalism, the one by applying unnatural methods, for extraneous purposes, to the forcing of local culture, and the other by attempting to ignore local differences of soil and climate, can do more harm than good" (6.346). He returns to it elsewhere – for example, in "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe": "the cultural health of Europe, including the cultural health of its component parts, is incompatible with extreme forms of both nationalism and internationalism" (6.523).

6. This point is reiterated in several essays, beginning with "Notes," which uniquely echoes TSE's wording here: "The shrinkage of the area of culture is accompanied with a shrinkage of the meaning of the word. I have already suggested that, while the disappearance of popular culture has concentrated the meaning of the word to the culture of the 'privileged classes,' the whole of even that culture has become so split up, that it is doubtful whether many members of the privileged classes are in possession of more than one or another fragment of it" (6.347).

7. Along exactly the lines sketched here, TSE criticizes "Eclipse of the Highbrow," a leading article in the *Times* of 25 Mar 1941, both in "Notes" (6.347) and in "Comment on a lecture by Van Wyck Brooks" (6.268), another product of early 1942.

8. TSE's concern with the "excessive concentration" of high culture in the metropolis is discussed at some length in "Notes" (6.348).

9. This analogy materializes in "Cultural Diversity and European Unity": "It is pretty widely maintained . . . that artificial, chemical fertilisers have only a very limited value; that their abuse adds to the spread of diseases among both plants and animals; and that when the land receives its natural return of manure and decaying vegetation instead of chemicals, it produces healthy

plants which do not need to be sprayed with other chemicals to rid them of blight and insects. I have no experience of such matters; but agriculture seems to me to provide an interesting analogy to culture. In this matter, government can only assist nature" (6.636).

10. Seeking to "civilize" India, education under British rule was conducted in English and emphasized European literature to the neglect of the long tradition of Sanskrit.

11. TSE develops the theme of cultural export in two 1943 texts: "Civilisation: The Nature of Cultural Relations" (6.420) and "Des organes publics et privés de la coopération intellectuelle" (6.470).

12. In the final section of "Notes" (6.351) and in "Cultural Forces in the Human Order," TSE explores the "conception of culture and religion as being, when each term is taken in the right context, different aspects of the same thing" (6.613).

Russian Ballet

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (10 Dec 1941) 5

Sir, – I should like to support the Poet Laureate's plea for the recognition of the importance of Russian ballet, and his suggestion that we should be given the opportunity to see both new ballets and new dancers from Russia.[1] The first step towards such a desirable end, surely, should be to obtain official recognition of the importance of the ballet in this country, in the form of exemption, at least for the British dancers of the Sadler's Wells company, from other forms of national service.[2] It would not be well for us to appear less enlightened than our Allies in our appreciation of the importance of this art, however freely we acknowledge their pre-eminence in it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

24, Russell Square, W.C.1

NOTES

1. In a letter to the *Times* of 4 Dec 1941, Poet Laureate John Masefield begins, "Now that Russia is linked with us in a great war, might not an effort be made to show to the people of these islands something of her soul through her great arts of music and the dance?" He goes on to propose the development of "a touring company of Russian ballet" that would perform "not only familiar triumphs, such as *Petrouchka, Prince Igor, The Fire Bird*, and *Coq D'Or*, but new works, based on Russian history and fable" (5).

2. Earlier in the fall, TSE had been asked by Boris Ford to sign an appeal to exempt the male dancers of the Sadler's Wells Ballet from military service. After some hesitation – he did not know Ford and was unsure of the provenance of the appeal – he agreed to lend his name to the effort provided that "at least half" of the other cultural luminaries who had been solicited also agreed to sign, "and if the publication of this letter has the approval of the people responsible for Sadler's Wells and the Ballet." He wrote to Ford on 23 Sept: "I certainly support the movement for the exemption of the male dancers (and of course the female also, for that matter) of Sadler's Wells. I am sceptical of the possibility of influencing the Government by such a letter, for I doubt whether any of the Ministers involved care two pins for Ballet." When Ford reported that his efforts on behalf of the dancers had failed, TSE expressed his regrets (7 Oct). A Leavis protégé who would go on to an academic career, Ford was then in service as a Captain in the Army Bureau of Current Affairs.

Greek Literature and Education

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 20 (11 Dec 1941) 72

Sir, – I agree with your contributor T.I. that the two books which he noticed, by Sir Richard Livingstone and Professor John Dewey, were both concerned with the subject of Education; I agree that "Dewey's approach goes much further back than Dewey" (on the well-established principle of *reculer pour mieux sauter*);[1] and I agree about the possibility that "a society inspired by saner purposes would evolve a system of education which would be different altogether from the system which we know to-day."[2] I hope that he agrees with me that such a society would attach importance to the study of Greek, not merely for the training of professional philologists, but for the education of men who might play some part in the shaping of "the national mind and the national policy."

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] *Trans:* "To step back the better to leap forward."

[2] In his response to TSE's letter of 27 Nov (6.190), "T.I." suggests in the issue of 4 Dec that the two books under review "are not perhaps so entirely unrelated as Mr. T. S. Eliot suggests." On the grounds that an educational system "is a reflection of the nature of the society which creates it," he disputes "the fallacious or at least the exaggerated claim that a fundamental change in the nature of society can be wrought by the reform of our educational methods" (64). In the course of this argument, he offers the three points TSE concedes in the present text.

The Duchess of Malfy[1]

The Listener, 26 (18 Dec 1941) 825-26

We expect a period of artistic or literary greatness, in any age or country, to be roughly divisible into three stages: that of its rise, that of its perfection, and that of its decline. It is convenient also when we can find three men, each of whom will represent one of these stages. This is possible in what we call Elizabethan drama – so-called because we must remember that some of the greatest plays of this drama, and all of those of its third period, were written and produced in the reign of King James I. For the first two periods of Elizabethan drama there is no difficulty in choosing our representative authors. Christopher Marlowe is unquestionably the greatest dramatist-poet of the first, Shakespeare of the second. But when we come to the third period, it is not immediately quite so clear why we should elect John Webster, instead of Beaumont and Fletcher, or Middleton, or Massinger, or Tourneur; or, having done so, why we should choose *The Duchess of Malfy* as his greatest play.[2] In talking about Webster, I do not propose to give you any of the historical facts. [: these you can get better from books, especially the monumental edition of Webster's plays by Mr. F. L. Lucas of Cambridge. Of critical essays on Webster, I would mention one by Swinburne, one by Rupert Brooke, and Mr. Lucas's introduction to his edition: I recommend these because their approach to Webster is in some ways very different from my own.[3] All that I intend to do now, is to try to explain why we put John Webster so high in his period, and why we put *The Duchess of Malfy* at the head of his plays.]

First of all, however, it is worth while to say something about the general characteristics of the drama of this third period, which may be said to have begun while Shakespeare was still writing, and to have gone on into the reign of Charles I, only to end abruptly with the closing of the theatres after the Civil War.[4] There are two aspects under which we may consider the development of Elizabethan drama: that of the development of plot and characterisation, and that of the verse style. If you look at an early play like Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, you find a loose kind of sensational plot, in which the emphasis is on exciting action, rather than on character.[5] It is melodrama, and strikes us as somewhat childish. The great advance in mental maturity shown by Marlowe, in his greatest plays, is due to his interest in character: his plays are equally violent and exciting, but they become serious tragedy because the character of the hero shows development according to circumstance – the tragedy, as is all true tragedy, is in the man's soul as well as in outward events. Shakespeare not only portrayed a much wider range of character than did Marlowe: he went very much farther, as far as any dramatist has gone, in showing the interaction and influence of different characters upon each other. At the same time, he developed his blank verse in such a way as to be able to express not only more emotions, but more subtle shades of emotion: Marlowe, though he was the first to turn melodrama into tragedy, yet remains a specialist in the more melodramatic moments, rather than a dramatist of the whole of life.

It is easy to understand why Shakespeare is so much the greatest; it is easy to appreciate Marlowe as a forerunner; but it is impossible to justify drama in decline unless we can show that it does something original. When we look at the dramatists who came after Shakespeare we are apt to notice at first only their inferiority. Take the plot, for instance. Except in his chronicle plays, Shakespeare is apt to set his plays in some remote place or time in early Britain, as in *Lear* or *Macbeth* or *Cymbeline*, or in some almost mythical country such as Bohemia or Illyria, or in Italy or ancient Rome.[6] But this is merely a convention – the public, no doubt, found these foreign places and remote times more glamorous – and his characters are always fundamentally English men and women such as he knew, and because they were true to human nature as he knew it, they are true to humanity in all places and at all times. But when we read *The Duchess of Malfy*, we find ourselves in a world that seems as unreal as that of some American films. The characters are meant to be, not English, but Italian: they are not, of course, real Italians, but Italians as the English audience of that day liked to imagine them: as the most civilised people in Europe, the most accomplished in the arts, and also as the most given to violent passion and crime. Romance and sensation come first, truth to human nature only second. We are struck, too, by the inconsequential nature of the plot and the inconsistency of people's behaviour. If the Duchess's two wicked brothers wanted her land and riches, why did they not attempt to kill the son and heir whom she is said to have had by her first husband, the Duke of Malfy? And if, for any reason, they objected to her having more children by some other man, it seems very odd that they should not have been able to do anything about it until she and Antonio should have had three children, the eldest of whom at least is old enough to have a speaking part in the play. Bosola had a pretty shrewd idea of what was going on before this first child was born, yet they do nothing for at least six years. If Ferdinand and the Cardinal were as determined scoundrels as they appear to be, their gripings of conscience seem very much out of character. We could go on analysing the play in this way; and if we did, we might come to the conclusion that *The Duchess of Malfy* is just as slipshod a play as Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and without the excuse, for Webster should have had the example of Shakespeare to make him do better.

Well, we must remember that there is a great deal in Shakespeare's plays which was beyond the audience of his time, just as it will be forever beyond the greater part of the audience at any time. What an audience always wants is sensation and novelty, and Webster's first business, like that of any playwright, was to give it something new and different and strange. Plays are written to be seen and heard: very few of the audience of *The Duchess of Malfy* in its own time would see it again and again, or would read it afterwards: none of them would have read it before. They would not demand a logical plot or wholly consistent characters: only excitement, novelty, some beautiful poetry, and a certain truth and consistency within the particular scene. Now this is what we find in the late Elizabethan or Jacobean dramatists at their best. Some, like Massinger, did aim at more perfect structure: but Massinger is not one of the most memorable of them.

I therefore ask you to look at *The Duchess of Malfy*, and to remember it, first of all, by certain scenes. The first that is impressive is at the end of Act I: the difficult position of a woman having to make love to a man so much beneath her in rank that he cannot take the initiative himself. Sometimes, in life or in fiction, there are other reasons for this reversal of roles: it is a situation of permanent dramatic possibilities, because the audience's interest is always sustained by wondering how the characters will carry it off: and in this scene the Duchess manages successfully without losing any of her dignity as a great lady. This is highly dramatic. Another scene of breathless tension is Act III, scene ii. The Duchess and Antonio, now her husband, are alone in her bed-chamber. She is brushing her hair, and has her back to him. For a joke, he slips out of the room unobserved, and the fact that he is not there to hear her next words makes them peculiarly poignant:

Doth not the colour of my hair 'gin to change?
When I wax grey, I shall have all the court

> Powder their hair with orris, to be like me.
> You have cause to love me; I entered you into my heart
> Before you would vouchsafe to call for the keys.[7]

With a sense of impending doom, the whole scene, in its domestic quietness, is full of atmosphere. The most terrible scenes of all are Act IV, i and ii, in which Ferdinand attempts to drive the Duchess mad, by giving her a dead man's hand in the dark, and by surrounding her with raving lunatics.[8] I know of no scene in any play, in which the horror, bestiality of mental torture is more impressively set forth. Throughout she retains her fortitude as the great lady: "I am Duchess of Malfy still…."[9]

And, so tremendous is this fantasy,[10†] that even Bosola, disguised as a madman, to assist in the torture, speaks in sublime prose:

> Thou art some great woman, sure, for riot begins to sit on thy forehead (clad in grey hairs) twenty years sooner than on a merry milkmaid's. Thou sleepest worse than if a mouse should be forced to rake up her lodging in a cat's ear; a little infant that breeds its teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bedfellow.[11]

Taken by itself, the scene is almost as overpowering as that of the Storm in *King Lear*: only the horror of that is sustained by the rest of the play, whereas that of *The Duchess of Malfy* is only in the moment.

But if there is this important difference between the work of Webster and that of Shakespeare – the difference between the truth which can be expressed in great scenes, and the greater truth which can only be expressed in a whole play, there is also a great difference between Webster and most of his contemporaries. Beaumont and Fletcher could also write single impressive scenes, but there is this difference, that there is throughout Webster's finest plays a consistency of tone, if not of plot and character, which indicates, I believe, a profounder moral and artistic seriousness; a seriousness which raises him also above one who was, at moments, as fine a poet – Cyril Tourneur. Furthermore, his great scenes have greater subtlety. It is not, as with Shakespeare, subtlety in the delineation of character. You cannot get that in a play so loosely constructed: you must have a proportion, and a relation of every scene to every other, and a restriction to essentials at which Webster did not aim. But Webster does get, from time to time, subtlety of states of emotion. Sometimes you will perceive that Webster is simply trying to reproduce the effect of some invention by Shakespeare, as in the resemblance of Ferdinand's madness to the sleepwalking scene of Lady Macbeth; but in other places the effect is original. The famous lines in which the guilty Cardinal admits his torment of conscience are a case in point:

> I am puzzled in a question about hell:
> He says, in hell there's one material fire,
> And yet it shall not burn all men alike.
> Lay him by. How tedious is a guilty conscience:
> When I look into the fishponds in my garden,
> Methinks I see a thing armed with a rake,
> That seems to strike at me. . . . [V.v]

Consider also the scene in which the child appears – there is a similar use of a child in another of his plays, *The White Devil* – and the last words of the Duchess to her waiting woman:

> I pray thee, look thou giv'st my little boy
> Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl
> Say her prayers ere she sleep. [IV.ii]

This is, of course, a kind of truthfulness to nature, a homeliness, which was never possible until Shakespeare found the way to it. Before Shakespeare, there are only accidental traces of it; with Webster, it is a deliberate dramatic effect.

I have not yet spoken of one very important reason why Webster's plays, in spite of their loose construction and incoherences, give a greater effect of unity than those of his contemporaries, and that is his greater gift of language. His plays are no more "literary" than those of the other late writers; indeed they are somewhat more carelessly written than some, but he had the gift of style. Even when he is imitating a situation already used by Shakespeare, his language is his own. There is, of course, a kind of common style to several of the Elizabethan dramatists, so that we cannot always be sure, even in fine passages, of the authorship: there were, for instance, commonplaces of words for the last speeches of heroes or villains when dying.[12†] But the playwright who had less of the native gift, only troubled to find the right word and phrase at the important moments: Webster has a natural overflowing gift for language, conspicuous in a time of rich and surprising phrase. John Addington Symonds, in his introduction to the Mermaid Edition of select plays of Webster and Tourneur, mentions some of the phrases characteristic of Webster; the poet of whom he most reminds us, in this gift of startling phrase, is John Donne.[13] In comparing Webster to a poet who was not a dramatist, I do not mean to suggest that the value of his writing lies in the poetry and *not* in the drama. His verse is essentially dramatic[14†] verse, written for the theatre by a man with a very acute sense of the theatre. The later Elizabethan and the Jacobean poetry is forever brooding upon the more terrifying aspect of death, of the death of evil-doers, and of physical mortification and corruption. No doubt the recurrence of the plague in London, with all its incidental horrors, acted as a constant stimulant to this mortuary imagination: but in Donne, and to a lesser degree in the plays of Webster, there is a spiritual terror as well. The strange twinges of conscience of the Cardinal and Ferdinand, in *The Duchess of Malfy*, would almost make tragedy of these two characters by themselves, as of men divided between irresistible passions and unescapable nightmares, forced to act wickedly and yet in terror of damnation: almost, I say, because only the very greatest poet and dramatist could have risen to such a situation. Yet, though Webster is not among the very greatest, though he represents, as I have said, an artistic decline inevitable after the greatness of Shakespeare, I do not wish to leave you with the suspicion that his work shows also a *moral* decadence. In a world without meaning there can still be horror, but not tragedy. Webster's drama is tragic, and belongs to a world in which right and wrong, the soul and its destiny, are still the most important things.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE delivered this talk – the fifth in a series titled "Masterpieces of English Literature" – at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, 25 Nov 1941. It was broadcast over the BBC's Indian Service, and TSE was paid 15 guineas. The TS of the original broadcast script is missing from the BBC Archives, Caversham; the carbon is in the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas. Sentences deleted from the end of the introduction before publication in the *Listener* are restored in brackets.

2. Webster's tragedy *The Duchess of Malfy* (or, usually, *Malfi*) was first performed ca. 1613. See TSE's 1919 discussion of this play in "*The Duchess of Malfi* at the Lyric: and Poetic Drama" (2.170).

3. A. C. Swinburne, "John Webster," *The Age of Shakespeare* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), 15-60; Rupert Brooke, *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1916). TSE reviewied Lucas's edition of Webster twice in 1928, focusing both times on the introduction (3.326 and 3.425).

4. The Puritan leadership ordered the closing in 1642, early in the Civil War, not after its conclusion.

5. *The Spanish Tragedy; or, Hieronimo is Mad Againe* (ca. 1587).

6. The Bohemia of *A Winter's Tale*, which includes coastline and desert, bears no geographical or cultural resemblance to the historical Kingdom of Bohemia (corresponding to the modern Czech Republic); nor does the Duchy of Illyria depicted in *Twelfth Night* bear any appreciable resemblance to the Balkan region of that name.

7. TSE also quotes this passage in "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1917) (1.514); in "*The Duchess of Malfi* at the Lyric: and Poetic Drama" (1920) (2.171); and in "The Death of the Duchess," a pendant poem of *The Waste Land* (*WLF* 105-07; *Poems1* 282-83).

8. TSE remarked in 1920 that "the scene of the severed hand and the torture of the Duchess are extraordinarily fine on the stage" (2.171).

9. IV.ii. TSE also singles out this line in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927) (3.250) and in his first review of F. L. Lucas's edition of Webster (1928) (3.328).

10†. In script: no paragraph indentation; *read:* "and, so tremendous is this fantasy,"

11. IV.ii. These lines immediately precede the previous quotation.

12†. In script: "dying – ('We cease to grieve . . . . .' etc.)." From Webster, *The White Devil* V.ii.

13. Symonds edited *Webster & Tourneur* (1888), one of the unexpurgated Mermaid editions of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. A copy is in TSE's library.

14†. In script: "dramatic" is underlined for emphasis.

Rudyard Kipling[1*]

There are several reasons for our not knowing Kipling's poems so well as we think we do. When a man is primarily known as a writer of prose fiction we are inclined – and usually, I think, justly – to regard his verse as a by-product. I am, I confess, always doubtful whether any man can so divide himself as to be able to make the most of two such very different forms of expression as poetry and imaginative prose.[2†] If I make an exception in the case of Kipling, it is not because I think he succeeded in making the division successfully, but because I think that, for reasons which it will be partly the purpose of this essay to put forward, his verse and his prose are inseparable; that we must finally judge him, not separately as a poet and as a writer of prose fiction, but as the inventor of a mixed form. So a knowledge of his prose is essential to the understanding of his verse, and a knowledge of his verse is essential to the understanding of his prose. In so far therefore as I concern myself here with his verse by itself, it is only with the aim of restoring it to its place afterwards and seeing the total work more clearly. In most studies of Kipling that I have read, the writers seem to me to have treated the verse as secondary, and in so doing to have evaded the question – which is, nevertheless, a question that everyone asks – whether Kipling's verse really is poetry; and, if not, what it is.

The starting point for Kipling's verse is the motive of the ballad-maker; and the modern ballad is a type of verse for the appreciation of which we are not provided with the proper critical tools. We are therefore inclined to dismiss the poems, by reference to poetic criteria which do not apply. It must therefore be our task to understand the type to which they belong, before attempting to value them: we must consider what Kipling was trying to do and what he was not trying to do. The task is the opposite of that with which we are ordinarily faced when attempting to defend contemporary verse. We expect to have to defend a poet against the charge of obscurity: we have to defend Kipling against the charge of excessive lucidity. We expect a poet to be reproached for lack of respect for the intelligence of the common man, or even for deliberately flouting the intelligence of the common man: we have to defend Kipling against the charge of being a "journalist" appealing only to the commonest collective emotions. We expect a poet to be ridiculed because his verse does not appear to scan: we must defend Kipling against the charge of writing jingles. In short, people are exasperated by poetry which they do not understand, and contemptuous of poetry which they understand without effort; just as an audience is offended by a speaker who talks over its head, and by a speaker whom it suspects of talking down to it.

A further obstacle to the appreciation of many of Kipling's poems is their topicality, their occasional character, and their political associations. People are often inclined to disparage poetry which appears to have no bearing on the situation of to-day; but they are always inclined to ignore that which appears to bear only on the situation of yesterday. A political association may help to give poetry immediate attention: it is in spite of this association that the poetry will be read, if it is read, to-morrow. Poetry is condemned as "political" when we disagree with the politics; and the majority of readers do not want either imperialism or socialism in verse. But the question is not what is ephemeral, but what is permanent: a poet who appears to be wholly out of touch with his age may still have something very important to say to it; and a poet who has treated problems of his time will not necessarily go out of date. Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" voice a moment of historic doubt, recorded by its most representative mind, a moment which has passed, which most of us have gone beyond in one direction or another: but it represents that moment for ever.[3]

We have therefore to try to find the permanent in Kipling's verse: but this is not simply to dissociate form from content. We must consider the content itself, the social and political attitude in its development; and, making an effort to detach ourselves from the assumptions of our own generation, enquire whether there is something more in Kipling than is expressed by Beerbohm's caricature of the Bank Holiday cornet virtuoso on the spree.[4]

I

In my selection of Kipling's verse I have found no place for the earliest published: to be precise, the selection begins from page 81 of the Collected Edition.[5] The earlier work is juvenilia, but yet is work which, having been published in its time and had a success in its time, is essential reading for a full understanding of Kipling's progress. Most of it is what it was intended to be, light reading in an English newspaper in India: it exhibits that same precocious knowingness about the more superficial level of human weakness that is both effective and irritating in some of his early stories of India. It is obviously the work of a clever young man who might go far in journalism, but neither in feeling nor in rhythm does most of it give any hint that the author would ever write a memorable poem. It is unnecessary to say that it is not poetry: what is surprising and interesting is that it does not pretend to be poetry, that it is not the work of a youth whom anyone would suspect of any aspiration to write poetry. That he is gifted, that he is worth watching, is obvious when you know how young he is:[6] but the gift appears to be only for the ephemeral, and the writer appears to aim at nothing higher.

There were, however, literary influences in the background. We have among his verse a pastiche of *Atalanta in Calydon* made for his own immediate purposes;[7] we remember also that McIntosh Jellaludin (who is introduced as falling over a camel foal while reciting "The Song of the Bower") on one occasion recited the whole of *Atalanta* beating time with a bedstead leg.[8] There was Kipling's family connection with Pre-Raphaelite society; and Kipling's debt to Swinburne is considerable.[9] It is never an imitation: the vocabulary is different, the content is different, the rhythms are different. There is one early monologue which is much more closely imitated from Browning than anything is imitated from Swinburne: but it is in two poems extremely unlike Browning's in style – "McAndrew's Hymn" [57] and "The 'Mary Gloster'" [66] – that Browning's influence is most visible.[10] Why is the influence of Swinburne and Browning so different from what you would expect? It is due, I think, to a difference of motive: what they wrote they intended to be poetry; Kipling was not trying to write poetry at all.

There have been many writers of verse who have not aimed at writing poetry: with the exception of a few writers of humorous verse, they are mostly quickly forgotten. The difference is that they never did write poetry. Kipling does write poetry, but that is not what he is setting out to do. It is this peculiarity of intention that I have in mind in calling Kipling a "ballad-writer" and it will take some time to make clear what I mean by that. For I am extending and also somewhat limiting the meaning of the word "ballad." It is true that there is an unbroken thread of meaning connecting the various kinds of verse to which the term "ballad" has been applied. In the narrative Border Ballad, the intention is to tell a story in what, at that stage of literature, is the natural form for a story which is intended to arouse emotion. The poetry of it is incidental and to some extent unconscious; the form is the short rhymed stanza. The attention of the reader is concentrated on the story and the characters; and the ballad must have a meaning immediately apprehensible by its auditors. Repeated hearings may confirm the first impressions, may repeat the effect, but full understanding should be conveyed at one hearing. The metrical form must be of a simple kind which will not call attention to itself, but repetitions and refrains may contribute an incantatory effect. There should be no metrical complications corresponding to subtleties of feeling that cannot be immediately responded to. At another stage of culture – as in Anglo-Saxon and in the elaborate forms of Welsh – poetry develops a conscious virtuosity, requiring a virtuosity of appreciation on the part of the audience: the forms impose upon the bard restrictions and obstacles in overcoming which he exhibits his skill. It must be remembered that this sophistication is not only present in what we call "modern" literature or in the later stages of development of classical literatures such as those of Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, Persian, or Chinese: it is a stage sometimes reached in the poetry of peoples of lower cultures. And on the other hand, ballad verse is not simply a stage in historical development: the ballad persists and develops in its own way, and corresponds to a permanent level of enjoyment of literature. There is always a potential public for the ballad: but the social conditions of modern society make it difficult for the good ballad to be written. It is perhaps more difficult now than it was at the time when *Barrack-Room Ballads* were written: for Kipling had at least the inspiration and refreshment of the living music-hall.[11]

In order to produce the contemporary ballad, it is of no particular help to hold advanced social views, or to believe that the literature of the future must be a "popular" literature. The ballad must be written for its own sake and for its own purposes. It would be a mistake also, and a supercilious kind of mistake, to suppose that the audience for balladry consists of factory workers, mill hands, miners and agricultural labourers. It does contain people from these categories, but the composition of this audience has, I suspect, no relation to any social and economic stratification of society. The audience for the more highly developed, even for the more esoteric kinds of poetry is recruited from every level: often the uneducated find them easier to accept than do the half-educated. On the other hand, the audience for the ballad includes many who are, according to the rules, highly educated; it includes many of the powerful, the learned, the highly specialized, the inheritors of prosperity. I do not mean to suggest that the two audiences ought to be, or must be, two worlds: but that there will be one audience capable only of what I may call ballad attention, and a smaller audience capable of enjoying both the ballad and the more difficult forms of poetry. Now it is to the ballad attention that Kipling addresses himself: but that does not mean that all of his poems appeal only on that level.

What is unusual about Kipling's ballads is his singleness of intention in attempting to convey no more to the simple minded than can be taken in on one reading or hearing. They are best when read aloud, and the ear requires no training to follow them easily. With this simplicity of purpose goes a consummate gift of word, phrase, and rhythm. There is no poet who is less open to the charge of repeating himself. In the ballad, the stanza must not be too long and the rhyme scheme must not be too complicated;[12*] the stanza must be immediately apprehensible as a whole; a refrain can help to insist upon the identity within which a limited range of variation is possible. The variety of form which Kipling manages to devise for his ballads is remarkable: each is distinct, and perfectly fitted to the content and the mood which the poem has to convey. Nor is the versification too regular: there is the monotonous beat only when the monotonous is what is required; and the irregularities of scansion have a wide scope. One of the most interesting exercises in the combination of heavy beat and variation of pace is found in "Danny Deever," a poem which is technically (as well as in content) remarkable [170]. The regular recurrence of the same end-words, which gain immensely by imperfect rhyme (*parade* and *said*) gives the feeling of marching feet and the movement of men in disciplined formation – in a unity of movement which enhances the horror of the occasion and the sickness which seizes the men as individuals; and the slightly quickened pace of the final lines marks the change in movement and in music. There is no single word or phrase which calls too much attention to itself, or which is not there for the sake of the total effect; so that when the climax comes:

> "What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade,
> "It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Colour-Sergeant said. [172]

(the word *whimper* being exactly right) the atmosphere has been prepared for a complete suspension of disbelief.

It would be misleading to imply that all of Kipling's poems, or at least all that matter, are "ballads": there is a great variety of kinds. I mean only that the approach to the understanding of what he was trying to do, in all his varied verse, is through the ballad motive. The best introduction, for my present purpose, is to call attention to a dozen or so particular poems representing his different types. For the reader to whom the ballad approach to poetry is the most natural, there is no need to show that Kipling's verse reaches from time to time the intensity of "poetry": for such readers it is more useful to discuss the content, the view of life, and to overcome the prejudices which they may entertain against any verse which has a different subject matter or a different point of view from that which they happen to accept: to detach it, furthermore, from irrelevant association with subsequent events and attitudes. That I shall attempt in the next section. In choosing the examples which follow here, I have in mind rather the reader who, if he believes that Kipling wrote "political jingles," stresses the word *jingles* rather than the word *political*.

The first impression we may take from inspection of a number of the poems chosen to show the variety, is that this variety is suspiciously great. We may, that is, fail to see in it more than the virtuosity of a writer who could turn his hand to any form and matter at will: we may fail to discern any unity. We may be brought to admit that one poem after another does, in one way or another, have its "poetic" moment, and yet believe that the moments are only accidental or illusory. It would be a mistake to assume that a few poems can be chosen which are "poetry," and that the rest, by implication, need not be read. A selection made in this way would be arbitrary, because there is no handful of poems which can be so isolated from the rest; it would be misleading because the significance of the "poems" would be lost except with the background of the "verse," just as the significance of the verse is missed except in the context of the prose. No part of Kipling's work, and no period of his work, is wholly appreciable without taking into account the others: and in the end, this work, which studied piecemeal appears to have no unity beyond the haphazard of external circumstances, comes to show a unity of a very complicated kind.

If, therefore, I call particular attention to "Danny Deever" as a barrack-room ballad which somehow attains the intensity of poetry, it is not with the purpose of isolating it from the other ballads of the same type, but with the reminder that with Kipling you cannot draw a line beyond which some of the verse becomes "poetry"; and that the poetry, when it comes, owes the gravity of its impact to being something over and above the bargain, something more than the writer undertook to give you; and that the matter is never simply a pretext, an occasion for poetry. There are other poems in which the element of poetry is more difficult to put one's finger on, than in "Danny Deever." Two poems which belong together are "McAndrew's Hymn" and "The 'Mary Gloster.'" They are dramatic monologues, obviously, as I have said, owing something to Browning's invention, though metrically and intrinsically ballads. The popular verdict has chosen the first as the more memorable: I think that the popular verdict is right, but just what it is that raises "McAndrew's Hymn" above "The 'Mary Gloster'" is not easy to say. The rapacious old ship owner of the latter is not easily dismissed, and the presence of the silent son gives a dramatic quality absent from McAndrew's soliloquy. One poem is no less successful than the other. If the McAndrew poem is the more memorable, it is not because Kipling is more inspired by the contemplation of the success of failure than by that of the failure of success, but because there is greater poetry in the subject matter. It is McAndrew who creates the poetry of Steam, and Kipling who creates the poetry of McAndrew.

We sometimes speak as if the writer who is most consciously and painstakingly the "craftsman" were the most remote from the interests of the ordinary reader, and as if the popular writer were the artless writer. But no writer has ever cared more for the craft of words than Kipling: a passion which gives him a prodigious respect for the artist of any art and the craftsman of any craft,[13*] and which is perhaps involved in his respect for Free Masonry. The problems of the literary artist constantly recur in his stories:[14*] in "Wireless," for instance, where the poor consumptive chemist's assistant is for a night identified with Keats at the moment of writing "The Eve of St. Agnes"; in "The Finest Story in the World," where Kipling takes the trouble to provide a very good poem, in rather free verse (the "Song of the Galley Slaves") and a very bad poem in regular verse, to illustrate the difference between the poem which forces its way into the consciousness of the poet and the poem which the writer himself forces.[15] The difference between the craft and the art of poetry is of course as difficult to determine as the difference between poetry and balladry. It will not help us to decide the place of Kipling in poetry: we can only say that Kipling's craftsmanship is more reliable than that of some greater poets, and that there is hardly any poem, even in the collected works, in which he fails to do what he has set out to do. The great poet's craft may sometimes fail him: but at his greatest moments he is doing what Kipling is usually doing on a lower plane – writing transparently, so that our attention is directed to the object and not to the medium. Such a result is not simply attained by absence of decoration – for even the absence of decoration may err in calling attention to itself – but by never using decoration for its own sake,[16*] though, again, the apparently superfluous may be what is really important. Now one of the problems which arise concerning Kipling is related to that skill of craftsmanship which seems to enable him to pass from form to form, though always in an identifiable idiom, and from subject to subject, so that we are aware of no inner compulsion to write about this rather than that – a versatility which may make us suspect him of being no more than a performer. We look, in a poet as well as in a novelist, for what Henry James called the Figure in the Carpet.[17] With the greatest of modern poets this Figure is perfectly manifest (for we can be sure of the existence of the Figure without perfectly understanding it): I mention Yeats at this point because of the contrast between his development, which is very apparent in the way he writes, and Kipling's development, which is only apparent in what he writes about. We expect to feel, with a great writer, that he *had* to write about the subject he took, and in that way. With no writer of equal eminence to Kipling is this inner compulsion, this unity in variety more difficult to discern.

I pass from the earlier ballads to mention a second category of Kipling's verse: those poems which arise out of, or comment upon topical events. Some of these, such as "The Truce of the Bear," in the form of an apologue, do not aim very high.[18]* But to be able to write good verse to occasion is a very rare gift indeed: Kipling had the gift, and he took the obligation to employ it very seriously. Of this type of poem I should put "Gehazi" [116] – a poem inspired by the Marconi scandals – very high, as a passionate invective rising to real eloquence (and a poem which illustrates, incidentally, the important influence of Biblical imagery and the Authorized Version language upon his writing).[19] The poems on Canada and Australia, and the exequy on King Edward VII, are excellent in their kind, though not very memorable individually.[20] And the gift for occasional verse is allied to the gift for two other kinds of verse in which Kipling excelled: the epigram and the hymn. Good epigrams in English are very few; and the great hymn writer is very rare. Both are extremely objective types of verse: they can and should be charged with intense feeling, but it must be a feeling that can be completely shared. They are possible to a writer so impersonal as Kipling: and I should like the reader to look attentively at the "Epitaphs of the War" [161].[21] I call Kipling a great hymn writer on the strength of "Recessional" [139].[22] It is a poem almost too well known to need to have the reader's attention called to it, except to point out that it is one of the poems in which something breaks through from a deeper level than that of the mind of the conscious observer of political and social affairs – something which has the true prophetic inspiration. Kipling might have been one of the most notable of hymn writers. The same gift of prophecy appears, on the political plane, in other poems, such as "The Storm Cone" [298], but nowhere with greater authority than in "Recessional."[23]

It is impossible, however, to fit all of Kipling's poems into one or another of several distinct classes. There is the poem "Gethsemane," which I do not think I understand,[24*] and which is the more mysterious because of the author's having chosen to place it so early in his collected edition, since it bears the sub-heading "1914-1918" [50].[25] And there are the poems of the later period.

The verse of the later period shows an even greater diversity than the early poems. The word "experimentation" may be applied, and honourably applied, to the work of many poets who develop and change in maturity. As a man grows older, he may turn to new subject-matter, or he may treat the same material in a different way; as we age we both live in a different world, and become different men in the same world. The changes may be expressed by a change of rhythm, of imagery, of form: the true experimenter is not impelled by restless curiosity, or by desire for novelty, or the wish to surprise and astonish, but by the compulsion to find, in every new poem as in his earliest, the right form for feelings over the development of which he has, as a poet, no control. But just as, with Kipling, the term "development" does not seem quite right, so neither does the term "experimentation." There is great variety, and there are some very remarkable innovations indeed, as in "The Way Through The Woods" [242] and in "The Harp Song of the Dane Women" [259]:

> What is a woman that you forsake her,
> And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
> To go with the old grey Widow-maker? [259]

and in the very fine "Runes on Weland's Sword" [283].[26] But there were equally original inventions earlier ("Danny Deever"); and there are too, among the later poems, some very fine ones cast in more conventional form, such as "Cold Iron" [255], "The Land" [275], and "The Children's Song" [272].[27]

I confess therefore that the critical tools which we are accustomed to use in analysing and criticizing poetry do not seem to work; I confess furthermore that introspection into my own processes affords no assistance – part of the fascination of this subject is in the exploration of a mind so different from one's own. I am accustomed to the search for form: but Kipling never seems to be searching for form, but only for a particular form for each poem. So we find in the poems an extraordinary variety, but no evident pattern – the connexion is to be established on some other level. Yet this is no display of empty virtuosity, and we can be sure that there is no ambition of either popular or esoteric success for its own sake. The writer is not only serious, he has a vocation. He is completely ambidexterous, that is to say completely able to express himself in verse or prose: but his necessity for often expressing the same thing in a story and in a poem is a much deeper necessity than that merely to exhibit skill. I know of no writer of such great gifts for whom poetry seems to have been more purely an instrument. Most of us are interested in the form for its own sake – not apart from the content, but because we aim at making something which shall first of all *be*, something which in consequence will have the capability of exciting, within a limited range, a considerable variety of responses from different readers. For Kipling the poem is something which is intended to *act* – and for the most part his poems are intended to elicit the same response from all readers, and only the response which they can make in common. For other poets – at least, for some other poets – the poem may begin to shape itself in fragments of musical rhythm, and its structure will first appear in terms of something analogous to musical form; and such poets find it expedient to occupy their conscious mind with the craftsman's problems, leaving the deeper meaning to emerge from a lower level.[28†] It is a question then of what one chooses to be conscious of, and of how much of the meaning, in a poem, is conveyed direct to the intelligence and how much is conveyed indirectly by the musical impression upon the sensibility – always remembering that the use of the word "musical" and of musical analogies, in discussing poetry, has its dangers if we do not constantly check its limitations: for the music of verse is inseparable from the meanings and associations of words. If I say then, that this musical concern is secondary and infrequent with Kipling, I am not implying any inferiority of craftsmanship, but rather a different order of values from that which we expect to determine the structure of poetry.

If we belong to the kind of critic who is accustomed to consider poems solely by the standards of the "work of art" we may tend to dismiss Kipling's verse by standards which are not meant to apply. If, on the other hand, we are the biographical critic, interested primarily in the work as a revelation of the man, Kipling is the most elusive of subjects: no writer has been more reticent about himself, or given fewer openings for curiosity, for personal adoration or dislike.

The purely hypothetical reader who came upon this essay with no previous acquaintance with Kipling's verse, might perhaps imagine that I had been briefed in the cause of some hopelessly second-rate writer, and that I was trying, as an exhibition of my ingenuity as an advocate, to secure some small remission of the penalty of oblivion. One might expect that a poet who appeared to communicate so little of his private ecstasies and despairs would be dull; one might expect that a poet who had given so much of his time to the service of the political imagination would be ephemeral; one might expect that a poet so constantly occupied with the appearances of things would be shallow. We know that he is not dull, because we have all, at one time or another, by one poem or another, been thrilled; we know that he is not ephemeral, because we remember so much of what we have read. As for shallowness, that is a charge which can only be brought by those who have continued to read him only with a boyish interest. At times Kipling is not merely possessed of penetration, but almost "possessed" of a kind of second sight. It is a trifling curiosity in itself that he was reproved for having placed in defence of the Wall a Roman Legion which historians declared had never been near it, and which later discoveries proved to have indeed been stationed there: that is the sort of thing one comes to expect of Kipling.[29] There are deeper and darker caverns into which he penetrated – whether through experience or through imagination does not matter: there are hints in "The End of the Passage," and later in "The Woman in His Life" and "In the Same Boat": oddly enough, these stories are foreshadowed by an early poem which I have not included, "La Nuit Blanche," which introduces one image which reappears in "The End of the Passage."[30] Kipling knew something of the things which are underneath, and of the things which are beyond the frontier.[31]*

I have not explained Kipling's verse or the permanent hold that it can have upon you. It will be enough if I can help to keep him out of the wrong pigeonholes.[32]* If the reader of this book denies that Kipling is a great writer of verse, I hope at least that he will have found new reasons for his judgment, for the ordinary charges brought against him are either untrue or irrelevant. I have been using the term "verse" with his own authority, for that is what he called it himself. There is poetry in it; but when he writes verse that is not poetry it is not because he has tried to write poetry and failed. He had another purpose, and one to which he adhered with integrity. It is expressed in the following poem (from *A Diversity of Creatures*):[33]†

The Fabulists
1914-1918

When all the world would keep a matter hid,
  Since Truth is seldom friend to any crowd,
Men write in fable as old Aesop did,
  Jesting at that which none will name aloud.
And this they needs must do, or it will fall
Unless they please they are not heard at all.

When desperate Folly daily laboureth
  To work confusion upon all we have,
When diligent Sloth demandeth Freedom's death,
  And banded Fear commandeth Honour's grave –
Even in that certain hour before the fall,
Unless men please they are not heard at all.

Needs must all please, yet some not all for need,
  Needs must all toil, yet some not all for gain,
But that men taking pleasure may take heed,
  Whom present toil shall snatch from later pain.
Thus some have toiled, but their reward was small
Since, though they pleased, they were not heard at all.

This was the lock that lay upon our lips,
  This was the yoke that we have undergone,
Denying us all pleasant fellowships
  As in our time and generation.
Our pleasures unpursued age past recall,
And for our pains – we are not heard at all.

What man hears aught except the groaning guns?
  What man heeds aught save what each instant brings?
When each man's life all imaged life outruns,
  What man shall pleasure in imaginings?
So it has fallen, as it was bound to fall,
We are not, nor we were not, heard at all. [21-22]

II

I have expressed the view that the variety of Kipling's verse and its mutations from one period to another, cannot be accounted for, and given a unified pattern, by tracing development as we might with most poets. His development cannot be understood through his verse alone, because he was, as I said at the beginning, an integral prose-and-verse writer; and to understand changes we have to consider the prose and the verse together. Kipling appears first to be a writer of different phases and occupations, who in each phase is completely developed, who is never so committed to the pursuit of one verse form as to be prevented from moving to another. He is so different from other poets that the lazy critic is tempted merely to assert that he is not a poet at all, and leave it at that. The changes in his poetry, while they cannot be explained by any usual scheme of poetic development, can to some extent be explained by changes in his outward circumstances. I say "to some extent," because Kipling, apparently merely the reflection of the world about him, is the most inscrutable of authors. An immense gift for using words, an amazing curiosity and power of observation with his mind and with all his senses, the mask of the entertainer, and beyond that a queer gift of second sight, of transmitting messages from elsewhere, a gift so disconcerting when we are made aware of it that thenceforth we are never sure when it is not present: all this makes Kipling a writer impossible wholly to understand and quite impossible to belittle.

Certainly an exceptional sensitiveness to environment is the first characteristic of Kipling that we notice; so that on one level, we may trace his course by external circumstances. What life would have made of such a man, had his birth, growth, maturity and age all taken place in one set of surroundings, is beyond speculation: as life directed, the result was to give him a peculiar detachment and remoteness from all environment, a universal foreignness which is the reverse side of his strong feeling for India, for the Empire, for England and for Sussex, a remoteness as of an alarmingly intelligent visitor from another planet. He remains somehow alien and aloof from all with which he identifies himself. The reader who can get a little distance – but not deep enough – below the level of Kipling's popularity as a teller of tales and reciter of ballads, and who has a vague feeling of something further underneath, is apt to give the wrong explanation of his own discomfort. I have tried to disturb the belief that Kipling is a mere writer of jingles: we must now consider whether these "jingles" are, in a denigratory sense, "political."

To have been born in India and to have spent the first remembered years there, is a circumstance of capital importance for a child of such impressionability. To have spent the years from seventeen to twenty-four earning his living there, is for a very precocious and observant young man an important experience also. The result is, it seems to me, that there are two strata in Kipling's appreciation of India, the stratum of the child and that of the young man. It was the latter who observed the British in India and wrote the rather cocky and acid tales of Delhi and Simla, but it was the former who loved the country and its people.[34] In his Indian tales it is on the whole the Indian characters who have the greater reality, because they are treated with the understanding of love. It is Purun Bhagat,[35†] it is the four great Indian characters in *Kim* who are real: the Lama, Mahbub Ali, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, and the wealthy widow from the North.[36] As for the Britons, those with whom he is most sympathetic are those who have suffered or fallen – McIntosh Jellaludin has learned more than Strickland.[37*] Kipling is of India in a different way from any other Englishman who has written, and in a different way from that of any particular Indian, who has a race, a creed, a local habitation and, if a Hindu, a caste. He might almost be called the first citizen of India. And his relation to India determines that about him which is the most important thing about a man, his religious attitude. It is an attitude of comprehensive tolerance.[38*] He is not an unbeliever – on the contrary, he can accept all faiths: that of the Moslem, that of the Hindu, that of the Buddhist, Parsee or Jain, even (through the historical imagination) that of Mithra: if his understanding of Christianity is less affectionate, that is due to his Anglo-Saxon background – and no doubt he saw enough in India of clergy such as Mr. Bennett in *Kim*.[39]

To explain Kipling's feeling for the Empire, and his later feeling for Sussex, as merely the nostalgia of a man without a country, as the need for support felt by the man who does not belong, would be a mistake which would prevent us from understanding Kipling's peculiar contribution. To explain away his patriotic feeling in this way is only necessary for those who consider that such feeling is not a proper theme for verse. There are perhaps those who will admit to expression in poetry patriotism on the defensive: Shakespeare's Henry V is acceptable, in his otherwise embarrassing grandiloquence, because the French army was a good deal bigger than the English force, even though Henry's war could hardly be described as a defensive one.[40] But if there is a prejudice against patriotic verse, there is a still stronger prejudice against imperial patriotism in verse. For too many people, an Empire has become something to apologize for, on the ground that it happened by accident, and with the addition that it is a temporary affair anyway and will eventually be absorbed into some universal world association: and patriotism itself is expected to be inarticulate. But we must accustom ourselves to recognizing that for Kipling the Empire was not merely an idea, a good idea or a bad one; it was something the reality of which he felt. And in his expression of his feeling he was certainly not aiming at flattery of national, racial or imperial vanity, or attempting to propagate a political programme: he was aiming to communicate the awareness of something in existence of which he felt that most people were very imperfectly aware. It was an awareness of grandeur, certainly, but it was much more an awareness of responsibility.

There is the question of whether "political" poetry is admissible; there is the question of the way in which Kipling's political poetry is political; there is the question of what his politics were; and finally, there remains the question of what we are to say of that considerable part of his work which cannot, by any stretch of the term, be called political at all.

It is pertinent to call attention to one other great English writer who put politics into verse – Dryden. The question whether Kipling was a poet is not unrelated to the question whether Dryden was a poet. The author of *Absalom and Achitophel* was satirizing a lost cause in retrospect, and he was on the successful side; the author of *The Hind and the Panther* was arguing a case in ecclesiastical politics; and both of these purposes were very different from that which Kipling set himself.[41] Both of Dryden's poems are more political in their appeal to the reason than any of Kipling's. But the two men had much in common. Both were masters of phrase, both employed rather simple rhythms with adroit variations; and by both the medium was employed to convey a simple forceful statement, rather than a musical pattern of emotional overtones. And (if it is possible to use these terms without confusion) they were both classical rather than romantic poets. They arrive at poetry through eloquence; for both, wisdom has the primacy over inspiration; and both are more concerned with the world about them than with their own joys and sorrows, and concerned with their own feelings in their likeness to those of other men rather than in their particularity. But I should not wish to press this likeness too far, or ignore the great differences: and if Kipling suffers in some respects by the comparison, it must be remembered that he has other qualities which do not enter into it at all.

Kipling certainly thought of verse as well as prose as a medium for a public purpose; if we are to pass judgment upon his purpose, we must try to set ourselves in the historical situations in which his various work was written; and whether our prejudice be favourable or antagonistic, we must not look at his observations of one historical situation from the point of view of a later period. Also, we must consider his work as a whole, and the earlier years in the light of the later, and not exaggerate the importance of particular pieces or phrases which we may not like. Even these may be misinterpreted. Mr. Edward Shanks, who has written the best book on Kipling that I have read (and whose chapter on "The Prophet of Empire" resumes Kipling's political views admirably) says of the poem called "Loot" (a soldier ballad describing the ways of extorting hidden treasure from natives): "this is wholly detestable, and it makes the commentator on Kipling turn red when he endeavours to explain it" [81].[42] This is to read an attitude into the poem which I had never suspected. I do not believe that in this poem he was commending the rapacity and greed of such irregularities, or condoning rapine. If we think this, we must also presume that "The Ladies" was written to glorify miscellaneous miscegenation on the part of professional soldiers quartered in foreign lands [211].[43] Kipling, at the period to which these poems belong, undoubtedly felt that the professional ranker and his officers too were unappreciated by their peaceful countrymen at home, and that in the treatment of the soldier and the discharged soldier there was often less than social justice: but his concern was to make the soldier known, not to idealize him. He was exasperated by sentimentalism as well as by depreciation or neglect – and either attitude is liable to evoke the other.

I have said that in Kipling as a poet there is no development, but mutation; and that for the development we must look to changes in the environment and in the man himself. The first period is that of India; the second that of travel and of residence in America; the third is that of his settlement in Sussex.[44] These divisions are obvious: what is not so obvious is the development of his view of empire, a view which expands and contracts at the same time. He had always been far from uncritical of the defects and wrongs of the British Empire, but held a firm belief in what it should and might be. In his later phase England and a particular corner of England become the centre of his vision. He is more concerned with the problem of the soundness of the *core* of empire; this core is something older, more natural and more permanent. But at the same time his vision takes a larger view, and he sees the Roman Empire and the place of England in it. The vision is almost that of an idea of empire laid up in heaven. And with all his geographical and historical imagination, no one was farther than he from interest in men in the mass, or the manipulation of men in the mass: his symbol was always a particular individual. The symbol had been, at one time, such men as

Mulvaney or Strickland: it became Parnesius and Hobden.[45] Technical mechanics do not lose their charm for him; wireless and aviation succeed steam, and in one of his most other-worldly stories – "They" – a considerable part is played by an early, and not very reliable, model of a motor car:[46] but Parnesius and Hobden are more important than the machines. One is the defender of a civilization (of a civilization, not of civilization in the abstract) against barbarism; the other represents the essential contact of the civilization with the soil.

I have said that there is always something alien about Kipling, as of a visitor from another planet; and to some readers he may still seem alien in his identification of himself with Sussex. There is an element of *tour de force* in all his work, which makes some readers uncomfortable: we are always suspicious of people who are too clever. Kipling is apt to arouse some of the same distrust as another great man who was alien in a very different way, and on a more worldly level though he too had his vision of empire and his flashes of profound insight. Even those who admire Disraeli most may find themselves more at ease with Gladstone, whether they like the man and his politics or not. But Disraeli's foreignness was a comparatively simple matter.[47] And undoubtedly the difference of early environment to which Kipling's foreignness is due gave him an understanding of the English countryside different from the understanding of a man born and brought up in it, and provoked in him thoughts about it which the natives would do well to heed.

It may well be unfortunate for a man's reputation that he should have great success early in life, with one work or with one type of work: for then his early work is what he is remembered by, and people (critics, sometimes, most of all) do not bother to revise their opinions in accordance with his later work. With Kipling, furthermore, a prejudice against the content may combine with a lack of understanding of the form to produce an inconsistent condemnation. On the ground of content, he is called a Tory; and on the ground of style, he is called a journalist. Neither of these terms, to be sure, need be held in anything but honour: but the former has come to acquire popular odium by a vulgar identification with a nastier name: to many people a critical attitude towards "democracy" has come to imply a friendly attitude towards fascism – which, from a truly Tory point of view, is merely the extreme degradation of democracy. Similarly the term "journalist," when applied to anyone not on the staff of a newspaper, has come to connote truckling to the popular taste of the moment. Kipling was not even a Tory, in the sense of one giving unquestioning loyalty to a political party: he can be called a Tory in a sense in which only a handful of writers together with a number of mostly inarticulate, obscure and uninfluential people are ever Tories in one generation. And as for being a journalist (in the sense mentioned above) we must keep in mind that the causes he espoused were not popular causes when he voiced them; that he did not aim to idealize either border warfare or the professional soldier; that his reflections on the Boer War are more admonitory than laudatory. It may be proposed that, as he dwelt upon the glory of empire, in so doing he helped to conceal its more seamy side: the commercialism, exploitation and neglect. No attentive reader of Kipling can maintain, however, that he was unaware of the faults of British rule: it is simply that he believed the British Empire to be a good thing, that he wished to set before his readers an ideal of what it should be, but was acutely aware of the difficulty of even approximating to this ideal, and of the perpetual danger of falling away even from such standard as might be attained. I cannot find any justification for the charge that he held a doctrine of race superiority. He believed that the British have a greater aptitude for ruling than other people, and that they include a greater number of kindly, incorruptible and unselfseeking men capable of administration; and he knew that scepticism in this matter is less likely to lead to greater magnanimity than it is to lead to a relaxation of the sense of responsibility. But he cannot be accused of holding that any Briton, simply because of his British race, is necessarily in any way the superior or even the equal of an individual of another race. The types of men which he admires are unlimited by any prejudice; his maturest work on India, and his greatest book, is *Kim*.

The notion of Kipling as a popular entertainer is due to the fact that his works have been popular and that they entertain. However, it is permitted to express popular views of the moment in an unpopular style: it is not approved when a man holds unpopular views and expresses them in something very readable. I do not wish to argue longer over Kipling's early "imperialism," because there is need to speak of the development of his views. It should be said at this point, before passing on, that Kipling is not a doctrinaire or a man with a programme. His opinions are not to be considered as the antithesis of those of H. G. Wells. Wells's imagination is one thing and his political opinions another: the latter changed but did not mature. But Kipling did not, even in the sense in which that activity can be ascribed to Wells, *think*: his aim, and his gift, is to make people see – for the first condition of right thought is right sensation: the first condition of understanding a foreign country is to smell it, as you smell India in *Kim*. If you have seen and felt truly, then if God has given you the power you may be able to think rightly.

The simplest summary of the change in Kipling, in his middle years, is "the development of the imperial imagination into the historical imagination." To this development his settling in Sussex must have contributed to no small degree: for he had the humility to subdue himself to his surroundings, and the freshness of vision of the stranger. My references here will be to stories rather than to poems: that is because the later unit is a poem and a story together – or a story and two poems – combining to make a form which no one has used in the same way and in which no one is ever likely to excel him. When I speak of "historical imagination" I do not assume that there is only one kind. Two different kinds are exemplified by Victor Hugo and Stendhal in their accounts of the battle of Waterloo. For the first it is the charge of the Old Guard, and the sunken road of Ohain; for the latter it is Fabrice's sudden awareness that the little pattering noise around him is caused by bullets.[48] The historian of one kind is he who gives life to abstractions; the historian of another kind may imply a whole civilization in the behaviour of a single individual. H. G. Wells can give an epic grandeur to the accumulation of an American fortune.[49†] Kipling's imagination dwells on the particular experience of the particular man, just as his India was realized in particular men. In "The Finest Story in the World" there appears the same passion for the exact detail that is given scope in his studies of machinery. The Greek galley is described from the point of view of the galley slave. The ship was

> the kind rowed with oars, and the sea spurts through the oar-holes, and the men row sitting up to their knees in water. Then there's a bench running down between the two lines of oars, and an overseer with a whip walks up and down the bench to make the men work. . . . There's a rope running overhead, looped to the upper deck, for the overseer to catch hold of when the ship rolls. When the overseer misses the rope once and falls among the rowers, remember the hero laughs at him and gets licked for it. He's chained to his oar, of course – the hero . . . with an iron band round his waist fixed to the bench he sits on, and a sort of handcuff on his left wrist chaining him to the oar. He's on the lower deck where the worst men are sent, and the only light comes from the hatchways

> and through the oar-holes. Can't you imagine the sunlight just squeezing through between the handle and the hole and wobbling about as the ship moves?[50]

The historical imagination may give us an awful awareness of the extent of time, or it may give us a dizzy sense of the nearness of the past. It may do both. Kipling, especially in *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies*, aims I think to give at once a sense of the antiquity of England, of the number of generations and peoples who have laboured the soil and in turn been buried beneath it, and of the contemporaneity of the past.[51] Having previously exhibited an imaginative grasp of space, and England in it, he now proceeds to a similar achievement in time. The tales of English history need to be considered in relation to the later stories of contemporary Sussex, such as "An Habitation Enforced," "My Son's Wife," and "The Wish House," together with "They" in one aspect of this curious story.[52] Kipling's awareness and love of Sussex is a very different affair from the feeling of any other "regional" writer of comparable fame, such as Thomas Hardy. It is not merely that he was highly conscious of what ought to be preserved, where Hardy is the chronicler of decay; or that he wrote of the Sussex which he found, where Hardy wrote of the Dorset that was already passing in his boyhood. It is, first, that the conscience of the "fabulist" and the consciousness of the political and historical imagination are always at work. To think of Kipling as a writer who could turn his hand to any subject, who wrote of Sussex because he had exhausted his foreign and imperial material, or had satiated the public demand for it, or merely because he was a chameleon who took his colour from environment, would be to miss the mark completely: this later work is the continuation and consummation of the earlier. The second peculiarity of Kipling's Sussex stories I have already touched upon, the fact that he brings to his work the freshness of a mind and a sensibility developed and matured in a quite different environment: he is discovering and reclaiming a lost inheritance. The American Chapins, in "An Habitation Enforced," have a passive role: the protagonist in the story is the house and the life that it implies, with the profound implication that the countryman belongs to the land, the landlord to his tenants, the farmer to his labourers and not the other way about.[53] This is a deliberate reversal of the values of industrial society. The Chapins, indeed (except for the point of their coming from a country of industrialized mentality) are a kind of mask for Kipling himself. He is also behind the hero of a less successful story in the same group, "My Son's Wife." (I call this story less successful because he seems to point his moral a little too directly, and because the contrast between the garrulous society of London – or suburban – intellectuals and the speechless solicitor's daughter who likes hunting is hammered with too great insistence. The contrast between a bucolic world in which the second-rate still participates in the good, and an intellectual world in which the second-rate is usually sham and always tiresome, is not quite fair.[54] The animus which he displays against the latter suggests that he did not have his eye on the object: for we can judge only what we understand, and must constantly dine with the opposition.) What is most important in these stories, and in "The Wish House," and in "Friendly Brook," is Kipling's vision of the people of the soil.[55] It is not a Christian vision, but it is at least a pagan vision – a contradiction of the materialistic view: it is the insight into a harmony with nature which must be re-established if the truly Christian imagination is to be recovered by Christians. What he is trying to convey is, again, not a programme of agrarian reform, but a point of view unintelligible to the industrialized mind. Hence the artistic value of the *obviously* incredible element of the supernatural in "The Wish House," which is exquisitely combined with the sordid realism of the women of the dialogue, the country bus, the suburban villa, and the cancer of the poor.[56]

This hard and obscure story, "The Wish House," has to be studied in relation to the two hard and obscure poems (not here included) which precede and follow it, and which would be still more hard and obscure without the story.[57] We have gone a long way, at this stage, from the mere story-teller: a long way even from the man who felt it his duty to try to make certain things plain to his countrymen who would not see them. He could hardly have thought that many people in his own time or at any time would take the trouble to understand the parables, or even to appreciate the precision of observation, the calculating pains in selecting and combining elements, the choice of word and phrase, that were spent in their elaboration. He must have known that his own fame would get in the way, his reputation as a story-teller, his reputation as a "Tory journalist," his reputation as a facile writer who could dash off something about what happened yesterday, his reputation even as a writer of books for children which children liked to read and hear read.

I return to the beginning. The late poems like the late stories with which they belong, are sometimes more obscure, because they are trying to express something more difficult than the early poems. They are the poems of a wiser and more mature writer. But they do not show any movement from "verse" to "poetry": they are just as instrumental as the early work, but now instruments for a matured purpose. Kipling could handle, from the beginning to the end, a considerable variety of metres and stanza forms with perfect competence; he introduces remarkable variations of his own; but as a poet he does not revolutionize. He is not one of those writers of whom one can say, that the *form* of English poetry will always be different from what it would have been if they had not written. What fundamentally differentiates his "verse" from "poetry" is the subordination of musical interest. Many of the poems give, indeed, judged by the ear, an impression of the mood; some are distinctly onomatopoeic: there is a harmonics of poetry which not merely is beyond their range but would interfere with the intention. It is possible to argue exceptions; but I am speaking of his work as a whole, and I maintain that without understanding the purpose which animates his verse as a whole, one is not prepared to understand the exceptions.

I make no apology for having used the terms "verse" and "poetry" in a loose way: so that while I speak of Kipling's work as verse and not as poetry, I am still able to speak of individual compositions as poems, and also to maintain that there is "poetry" in the "verse." Where terminology is loose, where we have not the vocabulary for distinctions which we feel, our only precision is found in being aware of the imperfection of our tools, and of the different senses in which we are using the same words. It should be clear that when I contrast "verse" with "poetry" I am not, *in this context*, implying a value judgment. I do not mean, here, by verse, the work of a man who would write poetry if he could: I mean by it something which does what "poetry" could not do. The difference which would turn Kipling's verse into poetry, does not represent a failure or deficiency: he knew perfectly well what he was doing; and from his point of view more "poetry" would interfere with his purpose. And I make the claim, that in speaking of Kipling we are entitled to say "*great* verse." What other famous poets should be put into the category of great verse writers is a question which I do not here attempt to answer. That question is complicated by the fact that we should be dealing with matters as imprecise as the shape and size of a cloud or the beginning and end of a wave. But the writer whose work is *always* clearly verse, is not a great verse writer: if a writer is to be that, there must be some of his work of which we cannot say whether it is verse or poetry. And the poet who could not write "verse" when verse was needed, would be without that sense of structure which is required to make a poem of any length readable. I would suggest also that we too easily assume that what is most valuable is also most rare, and vice versa. I can think of a number of poets who have written great poetry, only of a very few whom I should call great verse writers. And unless I am mistaken, Kipling's position in this class is not only high, but unique.[58†]

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "The introduction to *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*, published by Faber & Faber in association with Methuen and Macmillan, in 1941, also in America by Doubleday." Text as printed in *OPP*; significant alterations are recorded in the notes. Except where otherwise noted, poems are cited from *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*.

The edition was commissioned by Kipling's daughter, Mrs. Elsie Kipling Bambridge, through her agent, W. P. Watt. Her agreement with TSE, dated 19 June 1941, stipulated that he make a selection "which shall not be more than one-third of [Kipling's] published verse" and "write a critical appreciation of the said Verse which shall be of about ten thousand words," both subject to her approval. TSE accepted the agreement in a letter to Watt on 21 June. After Bambridge approved his selection of poems and subsequently the text of his introduction, TSE reported to John Hayward on 10 Oct that she had been "very easy to deal with."

On 5 Aug, Bambridge signed a publication agreement with Faber & Faber, and TSE appears to have begun working on the introduction as soon as that agreement was in place. In *A Choice*, he dates its completion to 26 Sept 1941, his own fifty-third birthday. It was "polished off," as he told Theodora Bosanquet on 13 Oct, "in a feverish competition with time" in the hope – as the aforementioned letter to Hayward explains – of getting the volume to market before Christmas. Published on 11 Dec in an edition of 10,120 copies, *A Choice* was sold out on 19 Dec.

2†. *A Choice* includes an additional sentence: "I am willing to pay due respect, for instance, to the poetry of George Meredith, of Thomas Hardy, of D. H. Lawrence as part of their oeuvre, without conceding that it is as good as it might have been had they chosen to dedicate their whole lives to that form of art."

3. "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1855), Matthew Arnold's poem on the Victorian crisis of faith.

4. "Mr. Rudyard Kipling takes a bloomin' day aht, on the blasted 'eath, along with Britannia, 'is gurl," first published in *The Poets' Corner* (1904). The cartoon shows a diminutive Kipling, sporting a plaid suit and Britannia's Roman helmet (*galea*), jigging and tooting a tiny trumpet as he stands arm-in-arm with a tall Britannia dressed in a stola, sandals, and Kipling's bowler hat. Beerbohm, who repeatedly caricatured and satirized Kipling, considered him an "apocalyptic bounder who can do such fine things but mostly prefers to stand (on tip-toe and stridently) for all that is cheap and nasty."

TSE's description of Beerbohm's Kipling as a "cornet virtuoso on the spree" echoes Kipling's poem "Gentlemen-Rankers" (*A Choice* 193), whose chorus – including the lines "Gentlemen-rankers out on the spree, / Damned from here to Eternity" – he quoted in his 1919 review "Kipling Redivivus" (2.37).

5. TSE made his selections from *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940). His first selection, "L'Envoi" (*A Choice* 43; *Definitive Edition* 81), was first published in Kipling's *Departmental Ditties* (1886).

6. Kipling was twenty years old when *Departmental Ditties* was published.

7. TSE refers to "The Masque of Plenty," Kipling's 1888 satire on a government report that, he felt, had whitewashed the hardships of the Indian peasants (*Definitive Edition* 35). The poem, as TSE notes, parodies A. C. Swinburne's 1865 verse tragedy.

8. In Kipling's 1888 short story "To Be Filed for Reference," McIntosh Jellaludin, an Oxford-educated classical scholar, has "gone native" in India. The narrator discovers and befriends him as he is dying of alcoholism in abject poverty. D. G. Rossetti's "The Song of the Bower" (1860) and Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* enter the story as TSE describes.

9. Kipling's aunt Georgiana – his mother's sister – was married to the painter Edward Burne-Jones.

10. The monologue TSE mentions as being "closely imitated from Browning" is "One Viceroy Resigns," first published in 1888 (*Definitive Edition* 69). "McAndrew's Hymn" and "The 'Mary Gloster'" date, respectively, from 1894 and 1896.

11. *Barrack-Room Ballads, and Other Verses* (1892), a series of vernacular poems on British army life, includes "Danny Deever," which TSE discusses below. Kipling published a further series of "Barrack-Room Ballads" in *The Seven Seas* (1896).

12*. TSE's note: "Though Kipling could manage even so difficult a form as the sestina." The reference is to Kipling's 1896 "Sestina of the Tramp-Royal" (45).

13*. TSE's note: "'The Bull That Thought' in the bull-ring 'raged enormously; he feigned defeat; he despaired in statuesque abandon, and thence flashed into fresh paroxysms of wrath – but always with the detachment of the true artist who knows that he is but the vessel of an emotion whence others, not he, must drink.'" The note quotes Kipling's short story "The Bull That Thought" (1924).

14*. TSE's note: "In 'Proofs of Holy Writ' (a story published in the *Sussex* edition only), Shakespeare and Jonson discuss a problem of choice of words put before them by one of the translators of the King James Bible."

In *A Choice*, this note begins, "There is a tale not reprinted in his collected works, but of considerable interest from this point of view, in which Shakespeare and Jonson." The note also refers readers to "the poem on Shakespeare in this volume" – that is, to "The Craftsman" (143).

The 1934 story "Proofs of Holy Writ" was collected in the thirty-five-volume *Sussex Edition of the Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Macmillan, 1937-39). Published posthumously, but largely prepared by Kipling himself during his last years, the series includes a number of uncollected works, though it is not literally "complete."

15. "Wireless" (1902); "The Finest Story in the World" (1891).

16*. TSE's note: "The great speech of Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra* is highly decorated, but the decoration has a purpose beyond its own beauty." TSE refers to the lines beginning "The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne, / Burn'd on the water" (II.ii.201ff).

17. In James's 1896 novella of that title, the metaphor suggests an underlying pattern that constitutes the fundamental unity of an author's work, "like a complex figure in a Persian carpet."

18*. TSE's note: "Though 'The Truce of the Bear' should be cited among the poems which evidence Kipling's political insight." This note does not appear in *A Choice*. "The Truce of the Bear" (1898) is, as TSE writes, an apologue – a moral allegory told as a fable – warning the British Empire against trusting Russia (*Definitive Edition* 274).

19. "Gehazi" (published in 1919, but dated 1915 by Kipling) uses the story of the prophet Elisha's servant, justly punished for dishonesty and avarice in 2 Kings 5, to comment acidly on the government ministers who were accused of profiting financially from the awarding of a substantial contract to the Marconi radio company. Kipling's principal target is Attorney General Sir Rufus Isaacs, who had been promoted, despite the scandal, to Lord Chief Justice.

20. "Our Lady of the Snows," an 1897 celebration of Canadian autonomy and fidelity (*A Choice* 100); "The Young Queen," written in 1900 for the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia (*Definitive Edition* 187); "The Dead King," a poem of 1910 (*Definitive Edition* 224). The last two poems are not included in TSE's selection.

21. "Epitaphs of the War" (1919): a series of epitaphs for combatant and civilian victims of World War I.

22. "Recessional" (1897) was written for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The poem, which takes the form of a hymn, focuses on the ephemerality of British Imperial power, striking an unexpectedly pensive note in spite of its celebratory occasion.

23. "The Storm Cone" (1932) offered an allegorical caution, in the face of rising German militancy, against complacency in the matter of national defense. Dismissed at the time, the poem's warning appeared prophetic within a few years.

24*. TSE's note: "Though the death of his son must be the cause of its intensity." This note does not appear in *A Choice*. John Kipling died in action, a victim of German artillery, in Sept 1915.

25. "Gethsemane" (1919) likens an English soldier's fear of impending death – and specifically of death by gassing – to Christ's agony in the garden.

26. "The Way through the Woods" (1910); "The Harp Song of the Dane Women" (1906); "The Runes on Weland's Sword" (1906).

27. "Cold Iron" (1909); "The Land" (1917); "The Children's Song" (1906).

28†. In *A Choice:* "to emerge, if there, from a lower level."

29. Three stories in *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) feature Parnesius, a British-born Roman centurion of the fourth century, who serves in the defense of Hadrian's Wall in northern England. In 1912, an archaeological team working at Corbridge produced evidence for the first time that Parnesius's cohort, the thirtieth legion, was present at the approximate location specified in Kipling's stories. Not until 1963 was this "discovery" exposed as a hoax perpetrated by Kipling enthusiasts.

30. The stories "At the End of the Passage" (1890), "The Woman in His Life" (1928), and "In the Same Boat" (1911) all concern experiences of recurrent nightmares or terrifying visions, with intimations of metaphysical horror. Hummil's nightmares of "A blind face that cries and can't wipe its eyes" in "At the End of the Passage" are prefigured in the 1887 poem "La Nuit Blanche" (*Definitive Edition* 28), whose delirious imaginings include "a Face [that] came, blind and weeping, / And It couldn't wipe Its eyes" (29).

31*. TSE's note: "Compare the description of the agony in 'In the Same Boat' (a story the end of which is truer to the experience than is the end of 'The Brushwood Boy'): 'Suppose you were a violin string – vibrating – and someone put his finger on you' with the image of the 'banjo string drawn tight' for the breaking wave in 'The Finest Story in the World.' Compare also the story 'A Matter of Fact' (of the submarine volcanic eruption which projects the sea-monster to the surface) with the opening passages of *Alice in Wonderland*: both depict external events which have exact nightmare correspondence to some spiritual terror. 'A Matter of Fact' is a better story than 'In the Same Boat,' for the psychological explanation in the latter story comes as an anti-climax to the experience."

In "The Brushwood Boy" (1895), a man meets a woman of whom he has dreamed throughout his life and discovers that she has similarly dreamed of him. In "In the Same Boat," Conroy and Miss Henschil, both traumatized by recurring nightmares, become friends and help each other to overcome their terrors. Their visions do not bring them together as lovers, however, as with Georgie and Miriam in "The Brushwood Boy." Conroy uses the metaphor of the stopped violin string to describe the effect of his harrowing dreams, adding: "As if a finger were put on the naked soul! Awful!" This figure resonates, for TSE, with Charlie's description of the sea, in "'The Finest Story in the World,'" at the moment it was about to overwhelm his ship during his past life as a galley slave. In "A Matter of Fact" (1892), as a result of the volcanic eruption TSE mentions, "one-half of the sea seemed to shoulder itself above the other half, and came on in the shape of a hill. There was neither crest, comb, nor curl-over to it; nothing but black water with little waves chasing each other about the flanks." The narrator's steamship is lifted to the peak of this towering "hill" of water, only to find herself "poised . . . on the slope of a hollow that stretched downwards for a good half-mile." This nautical roller-coaster ride may be compared with Alice's lengthy tumble down the rabbit-hole. Although the three journalists on board in "A Matter of Fact" all come sooner or later to realize that their eyewitness account of the dying sea monster flung up by the eruption is too fantastic to be accepted by readers, it remains true. At the end of "In the Same Boat," by contrast, the nightmare visions of the protagonists are discovered – anticlimactically, for TSE – to have originated in prenatal traumas.

32*. TSE's note: "Dr. J. H. Oldham has drawn my attention to the relevance of the chapter on 'Art and Magic' in that very remarkable book, *The Principles of Art*, by Professor R. G. Collingwood. Collingwood takes Kipling as an example of 'the artist as magician,' and defines a magical art as 'an art which is representative and therefore evocative of emotion, and evokes of set purpose some emotions rather than others in order to discharge them into the affairs of practical life' [69]. Professor Collingwood's contribution here seems to me extremely valuable; but while Kipling is a very good example of what he calls 'the artist as magician,' I do not feel that 'the artist as magician' is a complete description of Kipling as a writer of verse."

The note refers to R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1938). The chapter on "Art as Magic" portrays Kipling as having played a disruptive role in the 1890s, affronting the aesthetes because he energetically and successfully violated their sacred principle of art for art's sake (70). The "leading young writers" of the present, Collingwood asserts, "have reverted to magical art," though their work "is the propaganda no longer of imperialism but of communism" (70-71). The volume concludes with a reading of *The Waste Land*, offering TSE's poem as pointing a way out of this impasse between the aesthetic and the instrumental.

33†. In *A Choice*: "poem (from *A Diversity of Creatures*) which I have thought would come with more effect at the end of this section of my essay, than in the body of the book:"

A Diversity of Creatures (London: Macmillan, 1917) is – as is common with Kipling – a volume of short stories paired with poems.

34. Simla (now Shimla): state capital of Himachal Pradesh in northern India.

35†. In *A Choice*: "One is not very loving between seventeen and twenty-four. But it is Purun Bhagat,"

36. Purun Bhagat: the hero of the 1894 story "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat." *Kim*: Kipling's 1901 picaresque novel of late-nineteenth-century British India.

37*. TSE's note: "On the subject of Kipling's ethics, and the types of man which he holds up for respect, see a valuable essay by Mr. Bonamy Dobrée in *The Lamp and the Lute*." In *A Choice*, this note concludes with an additional sentence: "My only criticism of this essay is that it does not take full account of Kipling's later work." The reference is to Bonamy Dobrée, *The Lamp and the Lute: Studies in Six Modern Authors* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), 44-65. (For the topics to which TSE refers, see especially 46-52.)

Strickland, a policeman who appears in a number of Kipling's stories, is known for his expertise in Indian culture, which gives him the ability to go undercover as a native. In "To Be Filed for Reference," however, the narrator comments on the destitute McIntosh Jellaludin: "His manner was not pleasant, but he knew enough about the natives, among whom seven years of his life had been spent, to make his acquaintance worth having. He used actually to laugh at Strickland as an ignorant man – 'ignorant West and East' – he said."

38*. TSE's note: "Not the tolerance of ignorance or indifference." In *A Choice*, this note concludes with an additional sentence: "See 'The Mark of the Beast,' which those who do not believe in the existence of the Beast probably consider a beastly story." In this controversial horror tale (1890), an Englishman who has drunkenly desecrated an Indian temple is punished by a leprous priest whose bite has the effect of transforming him, over the course of the next day, into a beast. The narrator and the policeman Strickland then torture the priest until he undoes his spell.

39. Mithra (also Mitra or Mithras), the ancient sun deity at the center of the Roman cult religion of Mithraism, which appears in several of Kipling's works. In *Kim*, Arthur Bennett is a narrow-minded Anglican regimental chaplain; he is described as one who "lumps nine-tenths of the world under the title of 'heathen.'"

40. TSE refers to Henry's celebrated St. Crispin's Day speech before the Battle of Agincourt (IV.iii). Although the exact numbers are still disputed, the French forces have traditionally been described as approximately four times the size of the English.

41. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681-82): political satire on the failed attempt to legitimize the Duke of Monmouth as Charles II's legitimate heir. *The Hind and the Panther* (1687): allegorical poem advocating Roman Catholicism, to which Dryden had recently converted.

42. Edward Shanks, *Rudyard Kipling: A Study in Literature and Political Ideas* (London: Macmillan, 1940). "The Prophet of Empire" is the book's third chapter. Shanks (1892-1953) was an English poet, critic, and journalist. In "Loot," a comic ballad of 1890, a British soldier expresses his enthusiasm for (illegal) plundering:

> But the service rules are 'ard, an' from such we are debarred,
> For the same with English morals does not suit.
> (*Cornet*: Toot! toot!)
> W'y, they call a man a robber if 'e stuffs 'is marchin' clobber

With the –
(*Chorus*) Loo! loo! Lulu! lulu! Loo! loo! Loot! loot! loot!
Ow the loot!
Bloomin' loot!
That's the thing to make the boys git up an' shoot!

Shanks remarks: "This poem in all probability has done his reputation more harm than anything else he ever wrote" (82). TSE did not include it in his selection.

43. "The Ladies" (1896) recounts a soldier's relationships with a series of ethnically various "sweet'earts."

44. Kipling lived in India during his first five years, and then again from 1882 to 1889; during this second period, he wrote and published his early works. He settled in the United States from 1892 to 1896 and in Sussex from 1897 until his death in 1936.

45. Private Terence Mulvaney is an Irishman in the British army, Hobden a representative British countryman. Like Strickland and Parnesius, each of these characters appears in multiple Kipling works – Hobden notably in "The Land."

46. The plot of "'They'" (1904) is set in motion when the narrator, on a long drive, finds himself, seemingly by chance, at an old mansion inhabited by a blind woman and a number of elusive children. His motor car continues to play a role throughout the story.

47. Though baptized into the Church of England at age twelve, Disraeli was born a Jew. His family had emigrated from Venice in the mid-1700s.

48. In an interlude on the Battle of Waterloo in *Les Misérables* (1862), Hugo describes the catastrophic charge of Napoleon's cuirassiers into the unseen sunken road of Ohain, which lies between them and the English army. In Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839), the protagonist, Fabrice – also at Waterloo – hears "un petit bruit singulier tout près de lui" (a strange little sound quite close to him) and turns to see that four of his company have been hit by enemy fire. TSE invoked the same pair of scenes in a letter of 14 May 1924 to Owen Barfield criticizing the narrative voice in "Mr Cayley's Bet," a short story that Barfield had submitted for publication in the *Criterion*: "I am aware that the narrative manner is usually liked, but the restriction to exact statement seems to me a higher form of literature. It is rather like the difference between the battle of Waterloo described by Stendhal on the one hand and by Victor Hugo on the other" (*L2* 416).

49†. In *A Choice*: "fortune; Mr. Lytton Strachey (to name a lesser figure) gave reality to the great by dilating upon their foibles." TSE refers here to Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918).

TSE probably has in mind Wells's *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1931), whose tenth chapter opens with a sixty-page series of narratives on the acquisition of wealth by various modern individuals, most of them American. In 1932 TSE solicited four reviews of Wells's book for the *Criterion* from diverse reviewers; in the end, he received two (from D. S. Mirsky and Christopher Dawson) and published these in the Oct issue.

50. This passage quotes Charlie Mears's memory of his past life as a galley slave, which Charlie himself believes (incorrectly) to be an invention of his own imagination.

51. Both *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) are volumes of historical fantasy stories with pendant poems.

52. "An Habitation Enforced" (1905); "My Son's Wife" (first published in 1917; dated by Kipling to 1913); "The Wish House" (1924). "'They'" is less directly concerned than these stories with Sussex life and local color, but it does include descriptions of the countryside and encounters with its people.

53. The couple in Kipling's story return – without conscious intent – to the Sussex habitat and even to the very house from which Sophie Chapin's ancestors had emigrated to America over a century earlier. Here they "meet the genuine England of folklore and song."

54. In this story, Frankwell Midmore, a London gentleman, inherits a country house. His growing appreciation of Sussex life leads him to give up his comfortable city life and bohemian friends, who are modeled on the Bloomsbury Group.

55. "Friendly Brook" (1914).

56. "The Wish House" recounts a conversation between two local women, one of whom, Grace Ashcroft, has taken upon herself, through magic, "everythin' bad that's in store" for the man she loves. She develops an ulcer on her leg that deteriorates each time her Harry suffers illness or misfortune, and that has developed, over time, into a cancerous lesion.

57. The poems "'Late Came the God'" and "Rahere" precede and follow "The Wish House" in Kipling's 1926 collection *Debits and Credits*. Both poems concern love and suffering and are thus linked thematically to the story. Though omitted from TSE's selection, they appear in the *Definitive Edition* (753, 754).

58†. *A Choice* concludes with an additional paragraph: "Such reflections could be pursued indefinitely: but this essay is intended as an introduction: if it assists the reader to approach Kipling's verse with a fresh mind, and to regard it in a new light, and to read it as if for the first time, it will have served its purpose."

Revival of Christian Imagination

At the twelfth meeting of the Moot in Oxford from 1 to 3 Aug 1941, attended by TSE, Karl Mannheim delivered the first part of his lecture "Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist." Part I was titled "Christianity in the Age of Planning." At the end of the meeting, the minutes record, it was agreed "[t]o ask T. S. Eliot to write a paper on the 'Revival of Christian Imagination,'" mainly in response to Part II of Mannheim's lecture, "Christian Values in the Changing Environment," which was to be distributed to members together with TSE's paper before the next meeting, 19-21 Dec. Mannheim subsequently published both parts of the lecture in *Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist* (London: Kegan Paul, 1943, 100-65), leaving it "in the original form in order to serve its original purpose of stimulating thought rather than pretending to give final solutions to the questions raised." Copies of TSE's three-page mimeographed paper, in the form of a letter to chairman J. H. Oldham, survive in the Moot papers of Fred Clarke (Institute of Education, London) and A. D. Lindsay (Keele).

My dear Oldham,

I am sorry that I have found it impossible to prepare a paper on the subject of Christian Imagination worthy of the standards set by previous contributions to the Moot. I assumed that what was wanted was something which would provide relaxation between the sessions of hard work on Mannheim's ideas; but even to do that satisfactorily would require more time and thought than I have been able to give. I can only set down a few thoughts as they come to me; and even these, if they are of any use at all, will not provide the light relief desired, because I find Mannheim's paper very relevant and in consequence a point of departure for whatever I have to say. His three ways of approach defined on pages 4 and 5 give an articulation which I think I had already arrived at: I accept it, anyway. I observe that he associates me explicitly with approach (c): so I should like to make clear that in my opinion there can be no question of accepting any one way to the exclusion of the others – my emphasis was only an attempt to call attention to the one of the three approaches which seemed to be the most ignored.[1]

I take it that one is not called upon in this context to begin by defining Imagination: a task which would have to be prefaced by a definition of Definition. What I have in mind, I think, in this context, is Imagination as capacity for experience (I shall not define experience) in the sense in which "experience" is spiritual experience, and as capacity for experiencing not merely the immediate but the immediate with its relations – so that the highest imagination will combine the maximum intensity of immediacy with the maximum implication of pattern. All one can do is to indicate something of the way in which one is taking "imagination" in what one proceeds to say: what definition we get is through the use we are making of the term, rather than in the prefatory formulation. I am desirous of using it in a way which shall embrace the imagination of the saint and that of the artist. If our references, in either case, tend to be to the written word, that is because it is more convenient for illustration than other forms of expression or other forms of art.

I think that I accept what Mannheim calls his "pluralist" attitude: that is to say, his (a), (b) and (c) are so interrelated that each requires the others for its fulfillment, and so that you cannot affirm confidently that, by aiming at any particular one, we shall attain the others as a consequence.[2] It is obvious that individuals who arrive nearest to "personal ecstatic mystical communion with God" do not appear, as a rule, quite without relation to social environment. We have the evidence, first, of the marked differences of type between the mysticism of different peoples and different periods: no one could confuse the mysticism of Spain with that of Germany, or the mysticism of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (apart from the fact that Hugh and Richard of St. Victor were compatriots of your own) with that of the seventeenth; second, that a period which produces one or two great mystics is apt to produce a host of lesser mystics or enthusiasts as well. Furthermore, I believe that an historical study of the genesis of religious movements would confirm the importance of the social background in its religious aspect; as well as the more obvious relevance of economic and other social conditions and motives. (The latter are sometimes concealed from us by the fact that the religious, political and economic elements in the social whole take a different pattern in different periods; they were different for England in the seventeenth century from what they are to-day, and we have to employ our understanding of each century to throw light upon the other.) It occurred to me, in reading Mannheim's (b) that this element had a large part in [the] Oxford Movement: there you have a small group of men, living in a relatively circumscribed and peculiar environment such that their terms of reference were in Oxford – that is, to other individuals whom they knew personally – rather than in the country as a whole, and living also on terms of peculiarly intimate and entire relationship with each other. For the "second generation" of the Oxford movement this situation no longer existed, and so you got the programme of the liturgical battle on the one hand, and the battle for social justice (work in slum and dock parishes) on the other.[3]

It would be important also, in considering any religious movement, to take account of the particularity of what it reacts against. This in connection with (c). We cannot assume that a general conformity to Christian belief and practice will necessarily be favourable to the higher values of the Christian Imagination: it may bring about a stabilization at a low level ending in anchylosis or bonzery, as Mannheim points out.[4] On the other hand, it may be that some situations of anti-religion, religious deterioration, competing religion, etc., may be favourable to the birth and growth of the Christian Imagination, in various ways of stimulation, irritation and desperation, while other such situations are not. We have to allow for the possibility that our historical position is unique, and that the forces against which we fight, both in ourselves and in our environment, differ in some ways both in purpose, armament, and tactics from those of any historical parallel. (I cannot myself take very much comfort from the thought of the situation of St. Augustine.[5]) And it may be that the difference between Christian Imagination vs. Pagan Imagination, and Christian Imagination vs. what is called the Scientific Imagination is not the whole story. Perhaps the contemporary enemy is not so much another Imagination (that is to say, another type of spiritual experience) as non-Imagination, the great Negation.

Perhaps some reference to the problem of the Christian writer of imaginative literature (taking this term in the ordinarily accepted sense) may be of some use – and may be taken, I hope, as evidence of a desire to make a modest contribution of data rather than an overvaluation of my own experience. I would begin by suggesting that Mannheim's (a), (b) and (c) may be applied to literature. As an example of religious verse on a relatively primitive level (c) I would offer the Christian prayers and incantations found in that remarkable repository, the *Carmina Gadelica* or anthology of Gaelic (Scottish) poetry.[6] There are other groups of poetry where (c) has reached a higher level of culture and (b) appears – in the Quattrocento perhaps, with its background of Provençal and the Catharist heresy and its assimilation of Islamic elements, reaching (a) with Dante.[7] Now the contemporary writer finds himself cut off from the nourishment of level (c) and on level (b) he finds himself associating with a very mixed company of people. He is not simply a member of a small Christian community in the midst of a large other community; he is not simply, in the social sense, a member of both. He finds the Imagination itself broken up – it is by no means flourishing among the Christians. It is true that we may hold (I do) that the Imagination is essentially religious, and that therefore such Imagination as is found among non-Christian Western European and colonial society is a vestige of the Christian Imagination: but this only adds to the confusion. Some of his most important experiences on level (b) that is, in interpersonal relationships, are in relation to non-Christians. I will not pursue this analysis: but one is painfully conscious of the mutilated condition of the Imagination amongst theologians. It is not perhaps an accident that instead of great devotional writers, we have rather distinguished writers about devotional literature, though it would be unfair to suggest that von Hügel was no more than that.[8]

I find that I have instinctively taken (a), (b) and (c) as having a sort of hieratic order, which seems rather to depart from Mannheim's intentions towards them.

I think that the disintegration of the Imagination is manifest by the separation between those people who cultivate the arts (both as producers and as consumers) and those who cultivate the religious sensibility. The tendency is then for the religious sensibility to be stunted, and for the arts to perish slowly – as the religious imagination atrophies, the imagination *tout court* disappears also.[9] The arts, in their decline, pass through the stage of sensationalism; theology and philosophy which cease to be nourished by the imagination descend into verbalism.[10]

The question of the value of this sort of analysis – I say this sort, because the question remains independent of my own account given above – is the question of the possibility of planning, and the place of planning, which Mannheim raises in the most acute form in this paper, which is, it seems to me, much more adventurous than any previous application of his views. It would seem to require three distinct lines of operation, by differently equipped persons, but cooperation and understanding between those engaged would be of the highest importance. Furthermore, a readiness to cope with still more disadvantageous circumstances, and to take advantage of any new conditions presenting themselves which might be turned to advantage, is part of the preparation.[11]

Yours ever,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE refers to the pagination of the Mannheim's mimeographed paper. In *Diagnosis*, Mannheim suggests that the answer to the question "of where institutional interference and deliberate planning can do something for the growth of religious life will, of course, largely depend on . . . what we regard as the essence of religious experience":

> (a) One may hold that the substance of religion is to be found in personal communion with God. Then one will be inclined to think with certain mystics that nothing else in life really matters and that you cannot plan for it. . . . (b) Others will feel that the real religious experience is present only in personal relationships, that where two or three are gathered together in the name of God, God is present. . . . Those who share this opinion will, of course, focus their planning activities on the restoration of neighbourhood and fellowship. (c) Others may hold that one of the essentials of religious reality is incorporated in the pattern of social life. . . . [These] will believe in some kind of collective salvation, and will pay at least as much attention to the improvement of the social structure as to the improvement of the conditions for individual salvation through personal experience or through the creation of opportunities for fellowship. (125-27)

These are the three "approaches" that TSE addresses in his paper.

2. "It is obvious," writes Mannheim, "that planning for religion will mean different things according to the opinions held about the essence of religion. Each will look for a different remedy according to his particular religious philosophy. My personal conviction . . . leads me to believe that religion exists in all these forms and that a pluralist approach to planning will alone be satisfactory" (128).

3. The leaders of the traditionalist Oxford Movement were clergymen and scholars in and around the university; their followers, many of whom often ministered to the urban poor, were concerned with the ritual practices of the Church and advocated a controversial program of liturgical reform.

4. anchylosis (OED): The formation of a stiff joint by consolidation of the articulating surfaces. Though a bonzery is literally a Buddhist monastery, TSE appears to intend "strict monastic practices, as of bonzes" – a nonstandard meaning on the model of "midwifery," "foppery," "Whiggery," etc. He thus suggests that a "general conformity to Christian belief and practice" may result in spiritual ossification or rigid conventionality, as Mannheim warns: "The danger of living in a society with an established pattern is that the individual . . . may lead an impeccable life without adequate exertion. The danger of a social pattern which embodies religious experience is that everything may gradually and imperceptibly become mere convention without anyone being able to say exactly when the deterioration begins" (127).

5. That is, if a "historical parallel" can be drawn between modern Europe and the decadent Roman Empire of Augustine's time, TSE does not relish the comparison.

6. The first two volumes of *Carmina Gadelica* ("Gaelic Hymns"), edited by Alexander Carmichael, were published in 1900; two further volumes, edited by Carmichael's grandson, James Carmichael Watson, were published 1940-41. Two final volumes in the series were published subsequently.

7. Catharism, a dualistic form of Christianity regarded by the Catholic Church as heretical, arose in the twelfth century, taking root especially in northern Italy and southern France. In

1208, Pope Innocent III launched the Albigensian Crusade in a bloody attempt to suppress the heresy; this was followed by an Inquisition in the early 1230s. Fifteenth-century (Quattrocento) Italian art, as TSE suggests, did incorporate Islamic influences in design, ornamentation, etc.

8. The Modernist Catholic theologian Friedrich von Hügel, author of *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1908, 1923), sought to integrate the mystical with historical and intellectual elements in his religious philosophy. TSE reviewed von Hügel's *Selected Letters, 1896-1924* in the *Dial* of Feb 1928: "When we read enough of his letters . . . we come to think of him as almost a saint, as a minor master of the devotional life. He was manifestly not merely a good man; he had also that more exact and disciplined virtue which comes only from the regular practice of devotion in one of the systematic religions" (3.340).

9. *tout court*: in short

10. TSE posits a parallel theory of the "disintegration of the intellect" as an expansion of his earlier theory of the "dissociation of sensibility" in his eighth Clark lecture (2.750-53).

11. The transcribed discussion of TSE's paper by members of the Moot is printed in *The Moot Papers*, ed. Keith Clements (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 462-64; the paper itself is not included there.

Autobiographical Note

Who's Who in America[1]

Chicago: Marquis, 1942. 945-46

Eliot, Thomas Stearns, A.M.; Hon. Litt.D. (Cambridge, Columbia, Bristol, Leeds); LL.D. (Edinburgh); Hon. Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge; Director, Faber and Faber, Ltd.; *b.* 1888; *y. s.* of Henry Ware Eliot and Charlotte Chauncey Eliot of St. Louis, U.S.A;[2] *m.* Vivienne Haigh, *o. d.* of Charles Haigh Haigh-Wood. ***Educ.*:** Harvard University; the Sorbonne; Merton College, Oxford. Clark Lecturer, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1926; Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry, Harvard Univ., 1932-33; late Edit., *The Criterion*. ***Publications*:** *The Sacred Wood*, 1920; *Selected Essays*, 1932; *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 1933; *After Strange Gods*, 1934; *Murder in the Cathedral*, 1935; *Essays Ancient and Modern*, 1936; *Collected Poems, 1909-35*, 1936; *The Family Reunion*, 1939; *The Idea of a Christian Society*, 1939; *Practical Cats*, 1939; *East Coker*, 1940; *The Dry Salvages*, 1941. ***Address*:** 24 Russell Square, W. C. 1. ***Club*:** Oxford and Cambridge.

NOTES

[1] This is the first entry for TSE in the annual *Who's Who in America* series.

[2] Here, as in several of his Harvard Class reports, TSE misremembers. His mother was born Charlotte Champe Stearns; it was his sister who was named Charlotte Chauncey Eliot.

The Christian Conception of Education[1]

There are several problems which are distinct but intimately related: which, therefore, should neither be confused nor considered without reference to each other. There is first the problem of what should be done about Religious Education in the educational system as we have it at present. There is the problem of its place in a system reformed according to the sort of pattern that is likely or possible in the immediate future. There is also the question of whether we need a specifically Christian doctrine of education in general. It is with the third that this paper is concerned. This paper is not concerned with ideals and methods of teaching Divinity, or with such reforms in education as we may advocate as humane and enlightened people. It is not concerned with point 2 of the statement by the Archbishops, the Cardinal-Archbishop and the Moderator, which reads as follows:

> Every child, regardless of race or class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capacities.[2]

Within the scope of my paper, this point is not an educational point at all. The question whether every child should have equal opportunities of education, and if so how the opportunities are to be equalized, is primarily a question of social justice. The question of education is primarily the question of what education is and what sort of knowledge is in itself desirable. This question is sometimes ignored by those who see the problem of education only in terms of adapting our system to a changed and changing world, if they do not stop to enquire whether there are any permanent principles of education to which a changed and changing world should itself be brought to conform. What I am concerned with here, as I have said, is the need for a specifically Christian doctrine of education. I make no attempt to indicate what that doctrine should be; I am only urging the case for recognizing the need for it.

My question "whether the leadership of the Church requires a conception of education" is secondary to another, which can be put as follows: "is an adequate and purposeful conception of education possible without the leadership of the Church?" If our answer to this second question is in the affirmative, the leadership of the Church is superfluous, and our answer to the first question must be in the negative: for if education can get on without the Church, the Church had better make up its mind not to meddle where it is not needed, and to confine itself to the struggle, in which it is already interesting itself, for an adequate and universal religious instruction in schools. If, on the other hand, we conclude that no adequate conception of education is possible without the leadership of the Church, then our policy about religious instruction will be considerably altered and extended; for it must become a policy not only of fitting religious instruction into whatever system of education happens to prevail, but a programme of what ought to be the system of education into which that religious instruction has to be fitted.

We must recognize at this point that the system according to which only religious instruction comes within the province of the Church, while the remainder of the educational field is a neutral territory in which the theologian and Christian philosopher has, as such, no interest, itself implies a theory of education – a theory so generally accepted that it remains implicit, and therefore all the more difficult to disturb. It is important to consider how this state of affairs came about. I can only offer a few hints of what has happened, leaving their amplification and correction to those who are better qualified.

During the nineteenth century two tendencies in education are observable. The first is the tendency, already noted by the prescient mind of Coleridge, for education to develop as instruction in an increasing number and variety of subjects which came to be assigned equal value, and from which no significant pattern was formed. This movement was fostered by several social and economic developments, as well as by the proliferation and specialized extension of natural sciences – each requiring for its practice a very high degree of training, and each (rightly enough) acquiring a dignity of its own. With the rapid multiplication of subjects of study and research, the relative values of which could hardly, at that stage of novelty and change, be assessed, the task of organization would have been herculean, and was hardly attempted: so that instead of getting what the situation called for, a number of educational patterns coordinated by dominant principles, we remain at the pioneer stage of accepting a number of unrelated courses for various careers. In America, where development and change in education naturally met with less resistance or criticism, this centrifugal tendency was even elevated into a principle; and it was maintained, by a distinguished educator of the last century (himself trained as a scientist) that one subject of instruction was as good as another for turning out an educated man.[3] This belief the educator in question complemented by another (arising from that optimistic faith in the natural goodness of the human will which prevailed at the time and which perhaps a sounder theology might have corrected) to the effect that a youth of eighteen, entering a university, was competent to decide for himself what subject or combination of subjects could best provide him with a liberal education. The only criterion of whether a subject was necessary for your education, was whether you happened at the time to be interested in it.

This tendency, arising from the inability to cope with the rapid development of special sciences, was reinforced by another with quite different causes. The beginning of overt secularization lies in non-sectarianism: that is, in the growth of a feeling of injustice in the fact that differences of inherited religious allegiance, springing from difference of opinion on certain theological doctrines or certain forms of ecclesiastical organization, should exclude a man from an institution the advantages of which he was otherwise well qualified to benefit by. In consequence, not only differences of doctrine, but adherence to *any* religious faith, came to appear of little account.

I am concerned at the moment with what has happened in America: but I believe that what has happened in America has been happening here also – except for the special case of the public schools, which has other symptoms on which I shall have to comment presently. But the tendency in education which I have been discussing has gone farther in America, and therefore it is significant that a certain reaction against it, which calls itself humanism, has originated in America. Humanism is significant for our purpose because it represents an admission, from a purely non-Christian point of view, that the results of what has been happening are not altogether good. Humanism is, of course, an attempt to devise a philosophy of life without a metaphysic; and its champions have had much to say on other subjects than education. But these champions – and of course I mean Irving Babbitt and his disciples – have been mostly university professors; it was in the field of education that they first observed the disintegrating influence of contemporary values and ideals; and it was in this field that they spoke with most authority and to the best purpose. Against the ideals of specialized or miscellaneous instruction, of technical narrowness or of dilettante smattering, they opposed the ideals of unity and wisdom. It is true that the attention of the humanists was concentrated on the particular area of their own experience and activity, that of education at the college and university stage: but the principles which they defended had their implications for primary and secondary education as well. Their battle is by no means won. There are only sporadic evidences of a movement in that direction, in attempts to give a greater co-ordination to undergraduate work in some of the older universities – designing the changes partly on the models of the Oxford and Cambridge methods in humane studies – and some interesting experiment at the University of Chicago and at smaller institutions such as St. John's, Annapolis.[4] Some of these attempts have been limited by the defective foundations of school education. For my present purpose, however, the immediate influence of humanistic ideas of education is not to the point. The question is, are the humanist ideals enough – enough, not only from our point of view, but to perform what the humanists hope of them?

On the answer to this question a good deal depends. For if a secular or non-religious humanism can provide an adequate foundation for general education, such that from our point of view it requires only to be supplemented by religious instruction, then we not only have a common ground with the wiser, though smaller body of non-Christian educational theorists, but we could afford to leave to the disciples of Irving Babbitt in America and such groups as Dr. Leavis and his friends in this country, the elaboration and implementing of policies. We should then be forced to say, in response to the question to which I am speaking, that the leadership of the Church could not depend upon "an adequate and purposeful conception of education." For unless the Church can provide a truer philosophy of education than any non-Christian philosophy can produce, its vital concern with education is not obvious. I hold, however, that humanism of its nature stops short of a philosophy; that education must rest upon a dogmatic view whether natural or supernatural; and that in education as in other matters, the only final alternative to a worldly totalitarian view is a Christian view. We may be in accord with the humanists, in everything they want; they may be invaluable allies; but we must remember that Christian doctrine provides the only rational justification for the programme which we may share with them.

Humanism is, in fact, derived from Christianity and contingent upon it; unexplainable and unacceptable except as the outcome of Christian tradition. (I have argued this point elsewhere, and I do not propose to go further into the matter here.[5]) I know that its adherents have derived great comfort from Buddhism and from Confucianism: but the habits of thinking and feeling upon which they rely are habits resulting from centuries of Christian tradition.[6*] You can be eclectic in ideas, but you have no such freedom to choose your ancestors. In urging that education should aim at forming, not merely the instructed man or the technically competent man but the wise man, they restore a much needed emphasis; and no one should assert that wisdom is to be acquired only from the study of Christian authors. But wisdom is one thing without Christian wisdom, and another thing with it; and there is a sense in which wisdom that is not Christian turns to folly. Furthermore, wisdom is no substitute for faith; and however strongly convinced, cannot give a ground for its conviction. It is the product of experience of men and of books, of arts and of actions, and it can only appeal to the experiential test. To those who ridicule its advice, it can only say "try your way and see"; and afterwards it has the cold consolation of saying "I told you so." Its work is of the nature of a commentary, and the wisdom of Europe since the Christian revelation has been dependent upon the Christian tradition: what would be the significance of Montaigne or of La Rochefoucauld without the Christian background?[7] Such considerations as these go to explain why humanism as a way of life, and in particular as a way of education, is not enough. It can only appeal to a small number of superior individuals; it can help them to recognize what is wrong, but it cannot provide them with the power to influence the mass of mankind and to bring about what is right. It can appeal to those people who have already the humanists' feelings and desires but it cannot change the will of those who worship false gods. It is powerless against the drifting desires or torrential passions which turn by turn provide the motive force for the mass of natural men. Humanistic wisdom can provide a helpful, if in the end joyless nourishment for the intelligent educated individual – on another level, there is a comparable wisdom of the countryman rooted in village tradition and the life of the countryside and the procession of the seasons – but it cannot sustain an entire society. In the field of education, the humanistic approach may lead to many valuable reforms; but it seems to me inherent in the humanistic position to make unexamined assumptions, which it is likely to be right in making, but which it cannot justify.

I have read an admirable article by Dr. Leavis, which appeared some months ago in *Scrutiny*, in which he makes very sensible suggestions for the improvement of the English Tripos.[8] In this article he observes: "the problem of producing the 'educated man' – the man of humane culture who is equipped to be intelligent and responsible about the problems of contemporary civilization – becomes that of realizing the Idea of a University in practical dispositions appropriate to the modern world" [102]. And he quotes a sentence by a Mr. Brooks Otis, an American writer: "it is 'an urgently necessary work . . . to explore the means of bringing the various kinds of specialist knowledge and training into effective relation with informed general intelligence, humane culture, social conscience and political will'" [101].[9] One agrees. But to such questions as: "Why should we want humane culture? Why is one conception of humane culture better than another? What is the sanction for your conception of social conscience or of political will as against that, for instance, now dominant in Germany?" I do not think that the humanist can give a satisfactory answer.[10]

Not every system of theology can lead us to an answer either. If one took a strictly Lutheran point of view, I suppose that the Church's interest in education would be only to produce the maximum number of believers practising worship and the Christian virtues; and the secular part of education would not be our business as Christians. But if we accept the five points put forward by the Archbishops, the Cardinal-Archbishop and the Moderator, we cannot take refuge in this limitation.

> *Point* 2. Every child, regardless of race and class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capacities.

If we accept this point, we are obliged, as Christians, to concern ourselves about what the child receives under the name of "education." The Christian interest cannot ask less than that every Christian child should be trained to *understand* his faith to the extent of his capacities – an expectation which is very far from being realized to-day – and this understanding of his faith requires the provision of some education in history, and for the more intelligent beyond early youth some education in philosophy as well. It requires also the study of literature, for you cannot draw any strict line between theological and non-theological writing, and you cannot have an ample understanding of Christian literature without seeing it in its setting of non-Christian literature. Every educated Christian should have some acquaintance with St. Augustine and with Pascal – to mention only two great Christian names in literature – and you cannot understand St. Augustine or Pascal without some study of the worlds in which they lived, and the literature, whether secular or pagan, on which their minds had been fed. Our education as Christians may require even the study of natural science. And this is not simply saying that you cannot have a full Christian education without supplementing it by a general education. The interpretation of these studies will be given a different pattern by educated Christian belief. The difference of pattern is most obvious in the case of the study of history: which must look very different to the Christian, to the student who interprets history according to some individual or group rationalization, as of Hegel or Marx, and to the scholar for whom it is merely a series of events with innumerable and unrelated causes. Furthermore, without abating our insistence upon the universality of the Church and the transcendence of Christian communion over national and racial differences, we must remember that education has to be fashioned according to the needs of particular peoples living in particular places: that the Church must be interested not only in those principles of education which are valid for all peoples at all times and in all places, but in their application to people of different countries with different traditions and different habits of mind, and in their several types and orders.

What I have just been saying took its departure from the consideration of the limits of humanistic ideals of education. But it will be said that neither the explicitly non-Christian humanism, nor the instructional system which humanism set out to battle against, is indigenous or deeply rooted in this country, and that I have overlooked the ideals of public school education since the time of Dr. Arnold: that of "education for character," and that of "the Christian gentleman."[11] I do not propose to enquire whether it is not desirable that even those whom we do not educate to be "gentlemen" should be educated to be Christians; or to enquire whether it is desirable to have two systems of education quite so sharply separated in their aims as we appear to have at present. I confine myself to the question whether the "Christian education" associated with the name of Arnold has worn well enough to require no criticism. Those whose Christianity remains of the same kind as that professed by Dr. Arnold will find only incidental defects. But the Christian doctrine of Arnold was one which would be vague, unsound and perhaps heretical at any time; and its practical weakness is more apparent to-day than it was two generations ago. It assumed that the nation was Christian, and that it would remain so; and it took for granted a Christianity *moyenne* which discouraged both complete lapse from profession and the more intense developments of religious feeling. And the idea of a "national Christianity" provided no safeguard against this Christianity falling to a very low level. The Christian virtues were so closely united to the civic virtues as to be confounded with them. The distinction between Christian virtues and natural virtues becomes obliterated; honour becomes more important than morality; and indeed, for many men, the observance of a code of honour and good form in immorality is all that is left of Christian morals. Furthermore, the union of Church and State is one thing, their identification is another. The tendency has been, I think, towards a secularization of education apparently very different from that obvious in America, in the State-aided schools, in the provincial universities and increasingly in the older universities, but all the more insidious. In assuming the existence of a national Christian society and its continuance, the Christian education of Arnold provided no protection against the gradual diminution of Christian belief, and provided no weapons against the positive and militant anti-Christian movements of our time. And if education is not definitely orientated towards spiritual ends higher than those which Arnold set, it will, with the change in the temper of society, come to be orientated towards material ends, and of these a universal State system of education, with the propagation of a universal State system of values – whether or not these masquerade as Christian – may be the inevitable consummation.[12]

We cannot go back to the world as it appeared to be in the time of Dr. Arnold. We shall not fundamentally mend matters simply by universalizing the "public school system" (which might become something quite different, but not necessarily more Christian, in the process) and endeavouring to turn out a whole nation of "Christian gentlemen." Nor shall we effect the desired transformation merely by improving the standards and methods of religious instruction in schools, important as that task is. What is needed is a Christian doctrine of education which shall be part of a Christian doctrine of man. This demands hard thinking, for it is first of all theological thinking that must be done; and thinking about the general principles of Christian education must be followed by thinking which will be Christian sociology – for it must, to be applied, take into consideration the actual state of affairs in England, both material and spiritual, and the current tendencies of thought, feeling and behaviour. If we omit the first stage, as we are likely to do, we shall find ourselves merely planning to adapt our system of education to a "changing world," without pausing to ask whether there are not permanent principles of what should be the goal of education, and permanent standards of quality, in relation to which we ought to try to direct the ways in which this changing world shall change.

I am not here occupied with "the idea of a Christian society," and even if I were, my programme would not include the handing over of educational control to the Church. A State Church, or any Church, as a bureaucratic authority directing the education of the country, might turn out no better, perhaps worse, or perhaps not very different from the State itself; and we ought to aim to avoid, not promote, centralization and standardization. The task of the Church is to Christianize the State and society, not to take over any of the functions either of the State or of private groups or foundations. And if it is to Christianize education – which involves, as I have tried to say, not merely an insistence upon religious instruction, but the revolutionizing of educational ideals – some of its members must be prepared to give time to long and hard thought. The task in view is not to be accomplished by appointing commissions to do our thinking for us, or to arrive at conclusions and make recommendations before the thinking has been half done. It is not to be accomplished by conferences and manifestoes, but by the patient toil of various minds in the humble and submissive hope of the direction of the Holy Ghost. The first step is perhaps the most difficult of all, for it is simply to change our minds – to see the relationship and responsibility of the Church towards education as we have not seen it before; to see that religious instruction is only a part of this relationship and responsibility; and to see that unless the soul of education is inspired by Christianity it will fall a prey to such worldliness as will make the more limited efforts of religious teaching to be in vain.[13]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Malvern, 1941: The Life of the Church and the Order of Society* (London: Longmans, Green, 1942), 201-13. The volume bears the further subtitle "Being the Proceedings of the Archbishop of York's Conference." The conference was held in Malvern, Worcestershire, in Jan 1941. Its goal, as Archbishop William Temple explains in the introduction, "was to consider how far the Christian faith and principles based upon it afford guidance for action in the world of to-day" (vii).

Aside from TSE, the speakers were Sir Richard Acland, V. A. Demant, H. A. Hodges, Kenneth Ingram, D. M. Mackinnon, J. Middleton Murry, W. G. Peck, Maurice Reckitt (in absentia), and Dorothy L. Sayers. Each addressed one or more of a series of predetermined questions. TSE's contribution responds to the question "How far is the leadership of the Church in the national community dependent upon an adequate and purposeful conception of education?" TSE expressed considerable irritation with the conference, complaining afterwards to various friends about the food, the room temperature, the caliber of the discussion, and the resolutions, and he blamed the conference for the flu he suffered over the following month.

2. "Foundations of Peace: A Christian Basis – Agreement among the Churches," *The Times* (21 Dec 1940), 5. On the prelates' statement, see "Towards a Christian Britain" (6.167, n.3).

3. The "distinguished educator" is Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard from 1869 to 1909, who was trained as a mathematician and chemist. Similarities in phrasing suggest that TSE consulted Samuel Eliot Morison's *Three Centuries of Harvard: 1636-1936* (1936). Morison was a distant relative of TSE – as indeed was Charles Eliot – and their time at Harvard overlapped by two years, although they did not meet until 1929. Behind Morison's précis lies, in particular, Charles Eliot's famous 1869 inaugural address, which states that "the young man of nineteen or twenty ought to know what he likes best and is most fit for. If his previous training has been sufficiently wide, he will know by that time whether he is most apt at language or philosophy or natural science or mathematics." This premise forms the basis of Charles Eliot's argument for "elective studies," in which students choose, within limits, their own courses rather than having to pass "through one uniform curriculum." TSE mentions Irving Babbitt's attack on Eliot's reforms approvingly in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Oct 1933 (4.551-52). In a letter to his mother of 3 Feb 1929, he recounts a conversation with Babbitt about his own education, calling himself "one of the victims of the 'elective system'" (*L4* 411).

4. The University of Chicago developed its core curriculum, focusing on "Great Books," together with a seminar-based pedagogy, in the 1930s. St. John's implemented a similar program – comprising the whole of its undergraduate curriculum – in 1937.

5. TSE's "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928) characterizes humanism as "dependent upon" Christianity and even as "parasitical" (3.455). Similarly, his "Second Thoughts about Humanism" (1929) finds humanist ethics "quite untenable and meaningless without a religious foundation" (3.617).

6*. TSE's note: "I would not, however, minimize the importance of their contribution in reminding us of the need for a Christian examination and understanding of Eastern thought, which the Christian philosophy of the future cannot afford to neglect. With the professed humanists, in this work, I should associate the name of Dr. I. A. Richards."

7. Of La Rochefoucauld, TSE wrote in "Marivaux" (1919) that despite his skepticism of human virtue, "he is an implacable moralist. With the rest of the seventeenth century, he persists in measuring men by an invisible standard, fundamentally a Christian standard" (2.2). In "The *Pensées* of Pascal" (1931) TSE argues that "there is a real affinity between [Pascal's] doubt and that of Montaigne; and through the common kinship with Montaigne Pascal is related to the noble and distinguished line of French moralists, from La Rochefoucauld down" (4.345).

8. F. R. Leavis, "Education and the University: A Sketch for an English School," *Scrutiny*, 9 (1940), 98-120. The "English Tripos" is the course of study for a bachelor's degree in English at Cambridge, as well as the qualifying exam in which it terminates.

9. Brooks Otis (1908-77), American classical scholar, was then teaching at Hobart College in Geneva, New York. Leavis quotes these words, however, not from Otis but from his own earlier article "Why Universities?," published 1934 in *Scrutiny*. In "Education and the University," Leavis mingles phrases from both Otis and himself in a single sentence, specifying in a footnote which parts of the sentence are whose.

10. When he reprinted his essay in *Education and the University: A Sketch for an "English School"* (1943), Leavis responded to TSE's comments by dissociating his own methods and premises from those of Babbitt's humanism.

11. TSE refers to the educational reforms of Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School (1828-41). In contrast with the American "public school" system, the British "public schools" are independent (i.e., privately funded) schools historically associated with the education of the social elite.

12. In his introductory essay to *Malvern, 1941*, Bernard Causton sums up TSE's paper with a brief reference to this passage – "Mr. T. S. Eliot spoke modestly on the need for religious education but did not altogether commend the tradition of Dr. Arnold" – followed by several sentences on a rebuttal from the current headmaster of Rugby, who "sprang to the rescue of a great predecessor with a reasoned defence of public schools" (5).

13. Although he had previously agreed to have his paper published in the conference proceedings, TSE wrote to Archbishop Temple on 3 Feb 1941 that he had two reservations. One was that he wished to revise the text; the other was "the apprehension that the present design may be to publish the papers together with the report of the proceedings and the resolutions":

> If papers and resolutions are published together the impression may be conveyed to readers . . . that those who have read papers subscribe to the resolutions. I do not wish to ventilate my opinions either about the resolutions or about the competence or representative character of the Conference. I am only fearful lest I might find myself obliged, in self-defence, to make further statements on matters about which I should much prefer to remain silent.

After receiving Temple's assurance, however, that the papers would be published independently of the resolutions, and that he would have the opportunity to revise, TSE withdrew his objections on 15 Feb 1941.

Preface to *The Little Book of Modern Verse*, ed. Anne Ridler[1]

London: Faber & Faber, 1942. Pp. 160; Preface, 5-9.

The number and variety of anthologies of modern verse is considerable enough to justify a prefatory note to explain what kind of anthology this is. Its most obvious and (I believe) its singular characteristic is its small size. In a more comprehensive collection on a similar plan, such as *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, the beginner may find himself bewildered among the multitude of poets: with reference to such books the present volume may be regarded as a kind of primer, an introduction to anthologies.[2] But it resembles the collection mentioned, and differs from some others, in that it is not limited to any one group or line of descent. The editor has performed a task of some difficulty, in selecting representative poems by those whom she considers representative poets of the several literary generations which may be classed together under her title. Within the narrow limits imposed by a "little" book of verse, she has endeavoured, not to find a place for every distinguished name – which would be impossible – but to provide an illustration of the various styles of poetry which are generally acknowledged to be "modern."

The justice of including, in such a selection of modern poetry, poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Victorian, and by William Butler Yeats, older by fourteen years than the eldest of the poets on the list, is now pretty generally accepted, and needs no present defence. It need only be recalled that Hopkins's inclusion is due to two causes, neither of which would have operated alone: the first, that his poetry has only been accessible for some twenty-three years; the second, the originality of metric and language which sets him apart from his contemporaries. Had his work been available and recognised at the time of its composition, some of his influence would probably have been spent upon an elder generation of poets, and would not have come with full force upon men young enough to be his grandsons. Yeats, on the other hand, who was already recognised as a considerable poet by the end of the last century, owes his place to that very unusual power of development which has made him the contemporary, in turn, of three literary generations. His influence only grew stronger with the years; and it is notably his poetry since 1919 that has made a difference to younger writers.

Apart from these two great poets, we may take as within the term of "modern poetry" the work of those writers who had arrived at individual form and idiom during the four or five years immediately preceding the last war. Those who first found their speech during that war – whether we call them "war poets" or not – form a second age group; and since 1918 at least two other poetic generations can be distinguished. One thing that must strike the reader of the verse of the last twenty years is the rapidity with which one literary generation has followed another; and as each poet has continued to develop his own style, the impression may well be confusing. For this acceleration of change, the poets themselves are hardly to be blamed or praised: the cause lies much deeper than the conscious aims of individual writers, and is to be found, if at all, in the history of a changing and bewildered world, the mutations of which have given it a different appearance to poets no more than ten years apart in age.

Among so much variety, people are still found to ask, and to give an answer to, the question: what is it that makes modern poetry modern? Those who think that they can define modern poetry, are more often found among its detractors than among its admirers – for while it is easy to attribute a common quality to everything we like, it is still easier to attribute a common vice to what repels us. If we like the work of a particular poet, we are usually willing to allow that he has expressed more than he has been aware of, that he is the voice of his time, or in some sense an instrument of unknown powers: if we dislike it, we are only too ready to put down what seem to us his faults to his own perversity, affectation or incompetence. But the definition of "modern poetry" cannot be made more than partially by the intelligence. It cannot be explained in terms of influences: we can only explain a poet by the influences he has experienced, when he is not really a poet at all. It cannot be explained in terms of what the poets are consciously trying to do; for, apart from the fact that no two are trying to do quite the same thing, their awareness of purpose is only part of the situation. It certainly, as the reader of this selection will agree, cannot be explained in terms of a common idiom, vocabulary or metric. Modern poets do not all write in what is called *vers libre*; they do not unanimously, or even predominantly, adopt the words and imagery of an urban, industrialised and mechanised civilisation; they do not all share the same political or religious views, and in much of their work there is no evidence of any political bias or religious conviction at all. Yet they have something in common, though every definition of what it is will be mostly wrong or inadequate: what they have in common can be perceived by the sensibility, but not defined in words. For an explanation of what makes modern poetry would have to be an explanation of the whole modern world; to understand the poet we should have to understand ourselves – we should have, in fact, to reach a degree of self-consciousness of which mankind has never been capable, and of which, if attained, it might perish.

Just as every attempt to define modern poetry must be regarded as a blackboard exercise, to be erased as soon as completed, so every attempt to appraise the value of modern poetry as a whole is meaningless. We can make more than a guess at the relative excellence of individual poets, even at the final place of some, but to admire or to disparage the work of a period as a whole – to express delight that we live in an age of great art, or concern because our artists have failed us – is of no meaning. Every age gets the art it deserves, and every age must accept the art it gets. But just as every people is ready, on occasion, to find political scapegoats for its own delinquencies (and a democratic people differs from others only in having to find more at once) so it is sometimes inclined to find scapegoats in its men of letters, in an outcry which exceeds the ordinary dislike of everything new. To say that this or that writer is a fraud may be legitimate literary criticism: to arraign a generation of writers is merely bad sociology. The answer is not to insist on the merits of that whole generation – bad sociology is not confuted by bad criticism. The answer is in a more thorough and scientific examination of the state of society: an answer which, being outside of literary criticism, is as far beyond the terms of reference of this preface as it is beyond the space which it should occupy.

I invite the reader, then, to use this selection first like any other anthology, for the pleasure of finding a few new poems which he will like, and in the hope that he will be tempted to look further into the work of their authors. And I believe that a reading of all the poems together will give a feeling of what "modern poetry" is: even though he does not find himself able to make a definition of "modernness," it will help to put him on guard against other people's definitions.

I should like to add that I have interfered in this selection only to the extent of insisting that one poem by the editor herself (which I have chosen) should be included.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Ann Ridler (1912-2001), English poet, librettist, and verse dramatist. From 1934 to 1940, she worked at Faber & Faber, for most of that time as assistant to TSE; subsequently, he became her publisher. To him, also, was delegated the task of commissioning Ridler (in a letter of 29 Nov 1940) to edit "a small anthology of modern verse."

2. *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, ed. Michael Roberts (London: Faber & Faber, 1936), is over twice the length of Ridler's anthology.

3. Ridler's poem "A Letter" appears on 142-43. TSE had wished to include two of her poems but acceded on 5 Aug 1941 to her wish "not to be too conspicuous."

Although he disclaims any credit for the selection, TSE had in fact urged the inclusion of Charles Williams, Edwin Muir, and, especially, D. H. Lawrence. "Beyond that," he wrote to Ridler on 6 Dec 1940, "I think you ought to follow your own devices. With a full-sized anthology, there are various objective plans that can be followed; but a tiny one like this presents peculiar difficulties, and I think has to be more personal: so the main thing is to obey your own taste. Therefore, I don't want to make further detailed suggestions about what to put in (or rather, whom to put in) and leave out." He added, however, that he "should, of course, like to see something by [Lawrence] Durrell; and I think that Kathleen Raine has written a few nice poems, but you may not agree." Both Durrell and Raine were included in the anthology. At a later stage, TSE advised Ridler on 24 July 1941 to omit three poems by Edward Thomas on the grounds that their presence "somewhat breaks the framework of the book." Thomas was then excluded.

TSE may also have influenced Ridler's selection of his own poems. In declining to make the choice himself, he explained on 17 May 1941 that an author "has too much tenderness for the little poems of one's own which have always sat about in corners and never been asked for a dance by anybody." Taking this hint, Ridler included "Animula" and the "Landscapes" alongside "Gerontion" and "The Hollow Men."

“The Voice of His Time”: T. S. Eliot on Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*[1]

The Listener, 27 (12 Feb 1942) 211-12

In order to enjoy and understand the poetry of Tennyson now – fifty years after his death, and ninety-two years since he became Poet Laureate – we have first to try to see the circumstances which contributed to his peculiar success, and the circumstances which provoked a very natural and healthy reaction against his type of poetry later. He was, as many other famous men have been, fortunate in having been born at the right time. He was born in 1809. That meant that by the time he was ready to publish, the fever and intensity of the Romantic Age were over, and the situation was prepared for the appearance of just such a poet as Tennyson. It also meant that for several years he had the field to himself. Shelley, Keats and Byron were all dead; Coleridge had turned from poetry to philosophical and theological meditation; Wordsworth had reached an age at which nothing novel and surprising was expected from him.[2]

It is true that Tennyson’s first efforts were violently attacked and sneered at; it is true that several poets now forgotten were preferred to him: but all this did him no harm. It is true that, like other poets, he was at first very poor, so that his marriage was postponed for ten years: but he never suffered from desperate need, or had to turn his hand to uncongenial employment, or went through any of the misfortune or degradation which may make as well as mar a genius of another kind. His progress to fame was gradual but steady; his sales mounted; toward the end of his life, he was prosperous enough to be able to accept a peerage.[3] When he became Poet Laureate, in 1850, he became more than in title alone the National and Official Bard; he became what the public expected him to be – the servant both of Queen Victoria and of the nation – and to all appearance saw himself as what he was to all English-speaking peoples: the perfect public man. [But the glamour about him was not of the kind that lasts. This kind of success is not what we like to associate with true poets, great or small. We think of Dante, turbulent and bitter, long in exile, humiliated by patronage and by the disasters and disunion of his country; of Milton in old age, blind and poor, having given his best years to a cause which was partly defeated and partly out of date. Even about the later Shakespeare there is an ironic dignity: for his prosperity came not from his poetry, which few understood, but from his business ability as a theatrical manager. We should, perhaps, think of Tennyson rather in comparison with Virgil; but we know too much about the Victorian Age to see it in the romantic light which still invests the first Caesars.] And as Tennyson became the symbol of his age in its prime, so he became its symbol in the reaction, and the sort of verse which he represented became for poets and for the public the kind of poetry *not* to write.

I want to put before you Tennyson as I see him, without his trappings of success: a much more sympathetic character. There are several other aspects of Tennyson than that of the Bard of Queen Victoria. One appears in the later poems which he wrote in his native Lincolnshire dialect: the shaggy farmer, fond of his pipe and his glass of port, convivial and not without a shrewd and biting humour.[4] There is the really great classical scholar, with a strong affinity, not to the Greek, but to the Latin poets: for this side of him you should read the two beautiful poems, to Virgil and to Catullus, among his later work.[5] There is the craftsman who had the finest ear for verse, in my opinion, of any English poet since Milton. And there is the aspect of him which I wish to present in these few minutes: the poet of melancholia, passion and despair.

The official aspect of Tennyson, that of the man who conformed to all the conventions and supported all the ideals of his time, we find most notably in *The Princess* and the *Idylls of the King*.[6] Of the former, we need only say that its real subject is the problem of Higher Education for Women, that most of it now strikes us as rather absurd, and that it contains incidentally two or three of the most beautiful lyrics in the language. The *Idylls of the King* you have only to compare with the fifteenth-century version of the tales of King Arthur, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in an *unexpurgated* edition preferably, to admire the skill with which Tennyson adapted this great British epic material – in Malory's handling hearty, outspoken and magnificent – to suitable reading for a girls' school: the original ore being so refined that none of the gold is left.[7] A third long poem which was very much admired is *Maud*: a poem, I think, of forced and unreal violence, but containing two or three great lyrical passages which will last as long as the language.[8] So it is *In Memoriam* that I find, not only the one of Tennyson's long poems which is the best sustained and the most perfect as a whole, but the poem in which his poetic passion is released in its greatest intensity.[9]

In Memoriam is, of course, a long elegy to commemorate his friend Arthur Hallam. Tennyson's friendship with Hallam, who had been an undergraduate at Cambridge with him, gave rise to the strongest emotion he ever felt.[10†] It was some years after the death of his friend before Tennyson was able to control his grief and turn it to release in poetry. The intensity of the personal experience gives the poem its motive force: but a long poem of a hundred and thirty sections, some of considerable length, would not be readable if it expressed no more than personal grief at the loss of a friend. The poem expresses Tennyson's attitude toward life, and in expressing that, expresses also the attitude of his age, its superficial optimism, and its fundamental doubt and insecurity.

Viewed merely as a technical accomplishment, the poem would be at least an amazing *tour de force*. One would have said that the verse chosen, the short octosyllabic quatrain with the uniform rhyme pattern a – b – b – a, was only suitable for a very short poem, and that it would become very monotonous: and as you turn over the pages before reading the poem you may get the impression that it *is* monotonous and without structure. In the hands of anyone but Tennyson that is probably what would have been the result. But within this rigid and simple form, Tennyson produces an astonishing variety and elicits from his stanza effects of which one would never have believed it capable. Moreover, the inspiration never flags. Tennyson took a long time over the poem: perhaps there were superfluous passages, or stretches below his sustained level – if so, he eliminated and improved. The structure is designed with great care. Each section (some are very short and some longer) is a complete poem in itself – that is to say, represents a particular mood realised in its appropriate imagery: but the moods represented by the sections follow according to a logic of the emotions to form a continuous meditation on life and death. The recollection of the friend is always present, sometimes as the direct object, sometimes evoked by association, or arising in the midst of scenes of gaiety, or provoked by the passing of the Old Year. In the seventh section the poet returns to the house where his friend had lived: an experience which comes to everyone, sooner or later, is given expression once for all in the following lines:

Dark house, by which once more I stand
   Here in the long unlovely street,
   Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more –
  Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
  And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
  The noise of life begins again,
  And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

(Note the succession of five long syllables in the last line: one of the devices by which Tennyson escapes monotony of sound.) Hallam died young, and died abroad: in the ninth section Tennyson's thoughts revert to the bringing back of Hallam's body –

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
  Sailest the placid ocean-plains
  With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

The season, in the earlier part of the poem, is autumn –

Tonight the winds begin to rise
  And roar from yonder dropping day:
  The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies. [XV]

He proceeds to the thought of Hallam's last resting-place in England, in the country where the river Severn flows:

The Danube to the Severn gave
  The darken'd heart that beat no more;
  They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave. [XIX]

He thinks of their companionship "through four sweet years" in Cambridge [XXII]. Then, the year moves onward towards Christmas; other memories are recalled, and the approach of Christmas arouses further thoughts of life and death. He thinks from time to time of his sister, whom Hallam was to have married. Every season and every place brings another aspect of grief: whether he returns to Cambridge to find a new generation of young men, or whether someone else is going to Austria where Hallam died. By the

105th section he has come to the birth of the New Year, and presently to Hallam's birthday; and towards the end of the poem he tries to enunciate a view of life that will reconcile him, though it may not console, for such a loss.

Regarded merely as the expression of grief for the death of a loved friend, the poem is a marvellous journal of the various moods, thoughts and feelings that come, over a stretch of time, to the bereaved, and of the various aspects of grief elicited by different occasions. As such, the poem is, we feel, wholly true to life. But it is something more than that: for it is a poem written in a particular age by a man very representative of that age, on a subject which stimulated his faculties to their highest. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, the book which was to start more speculation on the origin and destiny of man – speculation both wise and foolish, scientific and unscientific, relevant and irrelevant – than any book of the century, did not appear until a year or two after *In Memoriam*; but we find in the poem anticipation of a view of life which was to take Darwin as its foundation.[11] Tennyson preaches a doctrine of evolutionary progress, as in the famous lines:

> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die. [CXVIII]

and the closing verses of the poem:

> No longer half-akin to brute,
> For all we thought and loved and did,
> And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
> Of what in them is flower and fruit;
>
> Whereof the man, that with me trod
> This planet, was a noble type
> Appearing ere the times were ripe,
> That friend of mine who lives in God,
>
> That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.[12]

But my point is not that Tennyson anticipated a scientific theory. That, in itself, would be only a curious accident, which would not confer any value on the poetry itself. My point is that he felt and expressed, before it had come to other men, what was to be the emotional attitude towards evolution of his and the next generation. It is an attitude of vague hopefulness which I believe to be mistaken. But that does not matter: what matters is that Tennyson felt it and gave it expression. Throughout *In Memoriam* there are two strands of questioning. One is the longing to reassure himself about personal immortality: to be convinced that he shall meet his friend again in another world. The other is the question of the future progress of the human race in this world. The two questions – and this is typical of the age – are not kept distinct: for the belief in the future of humanity in this world is offered, partly as an assurance of immortality and partly as a substitute for it. The belief in progress is the stronger of the two; the belief in progress came before Darwin, and made use of the discoveries of Darwin for its own purposes. But the pattern of Tennyson's moods is more complex than this. He foreshadows, not only the Victorian compromise between science and reasonable religion, not only the optimism of the later nineteenth century about the inevitability of a world in which everybody will gradually be better and happier, but also the insecurity of this optimism. He is trying, quite sincerely, to convince himself, and he does not quite succeed. It is not simply that a doctrine of the almost automatic progress of the human race no longer seems credible: it is that such a doctrine cannot satisfy the religious instinct. So there is, in *In Memoriam*, an underlying gloom and dissatisfaction: and in this also Tennyson was the voice of his time.

Those who nowadays wish to praise Tennyson as a poet often praise him as a great master of language, of imagery and of music, a poet who should never have meddled with deeper matters, with philosophical or religious ideas. I cannot agree, for I think this his greatest and most moving poem. It is usual to consider Matthew Arnold as the great spokesman in poetry of the religious uncertainties of the nineteenth century, and of their partial and temporary resolution. I do not mean to abate Arnold's significance, when I say that I think that *In Memoriam* is not only a greater technical achievement than any of Arnold's poems, but a more complex and comprehensive expression of an historic phase of thought and feeling, of the grandeur and the tragedy of the Victorian age.

NOTES

1. Broadcast on the BBC's Indian Service, in its "We Speak to India" series, 20 Jan 1942; title supplied by the *Listener*. TSE constructed the text hurriedly; as he told Fred Clarke on 18 Jan

1942: "I am rather behind my schedule: this weekend has been taken up in preparing a broadcast which I had forgotten." His lecture, arranged by the Pakistani program director and poet Z. A. Bukhari (or Bokhari) and introduced by Herbert Read, was the thirteenth installment in a broader series titled "Masterpieces of English Literature." The TS edited by the *Listener* editors is in the Ransom; altered punctuation and capitalization have been restored; a deleted passage is restored in brackets.

2. Tennyson published his first book, *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, in 1830. Wordsworth was then sixty years old. Coleridge had written his best-known poems by 1802, and although he continued to write poetry, his chief late works are in prose.

3. He became Alfred, Lord Tennyson in 1884, at age seventy-five.

4. Among Tennyson's poems in dialect, TSE appears to be thinking of "Northern Farmer, Old Style" (1864) and "Northern Farmer, New Style" (1870). Neither pipe nor port, however, is mentioned in these monologues – the "Old Style" farmer repeatedly calls, rather, for his "ääle" – and TSE may be conflating the personae with Tennyson himself, whose fondness for tobacco and port were legendary.

5. "To Virgil" (1882) and "'Frater Ave atque Vale'" (1880).

6. *The Princess* (1847), a long narrative poem on sexual equality, includes the well-known lyrics "Sweet and low, sweet and low," "The splendour falls on castle walls," "Tears, idle tears," and "Ask me no more." *Idylls of the King* (1859-85), a narrative poetic cycle based on the Arthurian myths.

7. *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485), Thomas Malory's prose compilation of French and English Arthurian romances.

8. *Maud: A Monodrama* (1855), a long poem in three parts, mixes dramatic and lyric elements. Its "lyrical passages" include the well-known song beginning "Come into the garden, Maud."

9. *In Memoriam A.H.H.* (1850), Tennyson's elegy for his friend Arthur Henry Hallam.

10†. In the TS, this sentence read: "That Tennyson's friendship with Hallam, who had been an undergraduate at Cambridge with him, gave rise to the strongest emotion he ever felt, is, I believe, incontestable."

11. *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, nine years after *In Memoriam*.

12. TSE quotes the final stanzas of the poem's epilogue.

Comment on a lecture by Van Wyck Brooks

The Partisan Review, 9 (Mar–Apr 1942) 115-16

I have been shown the text of a lecture by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks on "Primary Literature and Coterie Literature" and invited to comment upon it.[1] As for Mr. Brooks' judgements on particular authors I am impressed by the catholicity of his distaste: but I have no comment to make except that his description of Dr. I. A. Richards as "a neurological psychologist who lives in England" does not suggest a very intimate knowledge of that author's work.[2] It is not in Mr. Brooks's literary appreciations but in the social implications of his point of view that I am interested: and in these for the reason that I detect a similarity with a point of view which has recently been expressed on this side of the water also. It is a point of view which may be called reactionary, so long as we remember that reaction may move in more than one direction and to different distances; to a more, or to a less civilized condition than that of contemporary society. I hope I am not influenced by the newspaper rumour that my own writings have been condemned by the Vichy Government, as well as by Mr. Brooks: I mention this so that the reader may not suspect that I have any concealed grievances.[3]

The similarity that I find is between Mr. Brooks's point of view and that of a leading article in *The Times* of London on the 25th March, 1941. This article is entitled "The Eclipse of the Highbrow."[4] It has, like that of Mr. Brooks, a warmth of feeling puzzling to those who come under its condemnation, and goes farther than Mr. Brooks in its disapproval of the morals of contemporary writers and artists, whom it characterizes as "often impatient, self-indulgent, intolerant and touchy," as well as possessed of "a weak and arrogant contempt for the common man." (The "common man" of a paper like *The Times* can hardly mean the proletarian – it must mean the man of the educated upper classes.) The *Times* article complains that modern literature is one of "clever triviality," that art is brought down to "the level of esoteric parlour games," and it draws the now familiar comparison of modern poetry to the cross-word puzzle. Though it does not use the term, it holds up exactly the same picture of "coterie" art as does Mr. Brooks.

The reason for the violence of the *Times*'s writer's feelings, as of those of Mr. Brooks, must remain unknown. If either of them was anything of a sociologist, he might have been interested in not merely denouncing modern art, but in enquiring *why* it is what it is.[5] The attack is not made precisely on literary grounds, nor precisely on moral grounds, but upon grounds which are a confusion of the two. For the *Times* writer the virtues despised by the highbrows are "such as endurance, unselfishness and discipline"; for Mr. Brooks "the great themes are those by virtue of which the race has risen [*what race?*], courage, justice, mercy, honour and love."[6] I do not like to be held to underrate or despise these virtues: but (unless by "love" Mr. Brooks means *charity* in the theological sense) they are the natural, rather than the Christian virtues; and *justice*, we now know, can mean very different things to different people. Mr. Brooks further employs terms – "the biological grain," "the life-drive," "race-survival" – which are depressingly reminiscent of a certain political version of biology: his literary criterion seems to be conduciveness to race survival "on what might further be called the best possible terms" – what these terms are is not stated.

Literature has at some times and in some places been condemned for infraction of laws of religious orthodoxy;[7]* in some places at some times it has been condemned for infraction of laws of political orthodoxy: but in such a situation we can at least know where we are; and religious and political criteria need not be confused with literary and artistic criteria. In Britain and America we are not likely to find our issues defined so clearly as that: what is more likely is that democracy will be attacked in the name of democracy; that culture will be attacked in the name of culture, literature in the name of literature – even, perhaps, religion in the name of religion. I do not suppose for a moment that Mr. Brooks is aware of these possibilities, or of the tendencies which his views may encourage: but there was never a time when it was more important to think clearly and to define one's terms.[8]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Brooks's lecture, read at a Columbia University conference on 10 Sept 1941 and subsequently distributed without his permission, denounced modernist literature generally – and TSE especially – for aestheticism, pessimism, immaturity, neurosis, and self-regard, among other sins. The terms of the attack are often quite personal: Proust is a "spoiled child," Joyce a "sick Irish Jesuit," Stein "infantile," modernists "maladjusted persons . . . concerned, above everything else, for their own prestige," the New Critics "pretentious beyond all bearing," etc. These remarks were incorporated into Brooks's 1941 book *The Opinions of Oliver Allston*, where they are presented as the reflections of a fictional persona. The original version has been

reprinted in *The Survival Years: A Collection of American Writings of the 1940s*, ed. Jack Salzman (1969).

In "Kulturbolschewismus Is Here," published in the *Partisan Review* of Nov-Dec 1941, Dwight Macdonald criticized Brooks's lecture together with "The Irresponsibles," a 1940 essay by Archibald MacLeish. Responses from Louise Bogan, James T. Farrell, Henry Miller, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Lionel Trilling, and William Carlos Williams appeared under the heading "On the 'Brooks-MacLeish Thesis'" in the issue of Jan-Feb 1942. Below, an editorial note announced: "Among those invited to comment was T. S. Eliot, to whom we sent airmail a copy of Brooks' paper and of Macdonald's article. The following cablegram has just come: 'LETTER JUST RECEIVED QUITE AGREE STOP HOPE SEND COMMENTS BEFORE FEBRUARY BEST XMAS WISHES . . . THOMAS ELIOT.'"

2. See *The Opinions of Oliver Allston*, 241. The objects of Brooks's critique include TSE, Pound, Joyce, and Stein; Henry James and Ford Madox Ford; Faulkner, Dos Passos, and Robinson Jeffers; Proust, Rimbaud, Laforgue, Mallarmé, and Valéry; Picasso and Braque; John Crowe Ransom, Yvor Winters, and Cleanth Brooks.

3. In this passage TSE takes his cue from Macdonald, whose rebuttal characterizes Brooks's speech as reactionary and argues that it reproduces "the specific cultural values of Stalinism and the specific methods of the Moscow Trials" (449).

4. "Eclipse of the Highbrow," *The Times* (25 Mar 1941), 5. TSE mentioned this article in a letter to John Hayward on the day it was published: "Geoffrey rang me up this morning to call my attention to the nasty leader in the *Times* which practically accuses all of my generation of being embusqués and worse. He proposes to answer it with a few anonymous figures of poetry sales. Peradventure the writer of the leader was the author of the obituary of Joyce, and has read my 'Message to the Fish' in *Horizon*" (6.158). Embusqué (OED): "One who avoids military service (as by securing a post in a government office or the Civil Service)." TSE would again respond to the *Times* article in "Notes towards a Definition of Culture" (6.347); see also his comments in the outline for that essay (6.198).

5. Macdonald, in contrast, defends modernism on the grounds that it truthfully exposes the decay of bourgeois culture, of which it is an authentic product (445-46).

6. *The Opinions of Oliver Allston*, 211.

7*. TSE's note: "Mr. Brooks, by the way, confuses heterodoxy with blasphemy."

8. On 5 Jan 1942, TSE reported to Hayward, "I have been asked by the *Partisan Review* to write a few words on the subject of an outbreak by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks (whom I remember at Harvard as a dapper little man with a taste for Charles Lamb) and have done so." To Macdonald, on the same day, he explained his rhetorical strategy:

> I have responded to your suggestion only briefly: partly from lack of time, because a full rejoinder to anything so comprehensively confused as Brooks's paper would have to be very long indeed, and partly because I think that this is the central point, and wrangling over his opinions of the various authors is liable to confuse the issue. I have, after all, said only what you have said yourself at greater length, but I think it is worth while that this should be said by various people and from various points of view. As for Brooks himself, I am sorry to have to speak at all: because the tone of his writing suggests that he should be treated gently as a psychological case.

As an undergraduate, TSE had reviewed Brooks's first book, *The Wine of the Puritans* (1909), admiringly in the *Harvard Advocate* (1.18), and in a letter of 9 Aug 1920, he reminded Brooks that "when I was a Freshman at Harvard . . . you were a prominent man of letters there" (*L1* 485). "I remember him," he told Allan S. Kaplan on 16 Oct 1956, "as having a good deal of personal charm, as being very dapper and neatly dressed, and giving the appearance, to a humble freshman, of being rather English."

Poetry, Speech and Music

TSE composed this unpublished lecture for his five-week tour of neutral Sweden (from late Apr through 24 May 1942) under the auspices of the British Council. Under the subheading "Light in Scandinavia," the *Times Literary Supplement* reported on 9 May 1942: "Mr. T. S. Eliot, who is in Sweden lecturing on behalf of the British Council, is talking to his audiences on 'Poetry in the Theatre' and 'Poetry, Speech and Music.' These lectures are attracting much interest and many Swedish newspapers have published long interviews with Mr. Eliot" (1). The present lecture is closely related to "The Music of Poetry," sharing a number of major points and some language with that lecture, which was written two months earlier. TSE reported to John Hayward on 2 Feb that he had "dashed off" "The Music of Poetry" for Glasgow University, and on 30 Mar that he planned to begin work on "Poetry, Speech and Music" the following day. "The Music of Poetry" was published as a pamphlet on 30 Aug, and in time TSE came to think of it as the more finished piece; he told Ronald Bottrall on 4 Nov 1947 that "Poetry, Speech and Music is really superseded by the lecture on the music of poetry which I gave in Glasgow in 1944" (i.e., 1942).

The twenty-page typescript (with pen-and-ink corrections) includes a holograph address on top margin: British Council, Birger Jarlsgatan 15, Stockholm, Sweden.

The title I have chosen, for what I am going to talk about, may, I fear, sound depressingly abstract and technical. So I want to excuse it at once, by saying that it represents an indirect approach to what I suppose you would like me to talk about. The subject on which I am supposed to be something of an authority, and the one, therefore, on which people are most willing to listen to me, is modern English poetry: and what they usually want is an explanation, which should be as precise as the answer to a riddle. They want to be made to feel that they understand it – sometimes they want to learn to enjoy it, and sometimes they merely want to be able to give a good reason for not enjoying it. Now, in one sense, I do know more about contemporary English poetry than almost anyone else does: I am in a position in which I have to read a great deal of poetry before it is published, including, by the way, a good deal that never does get published. So it is difficult for me, as we say, to see the wood for the trees: it has been much more my business to notice the difference between one poet and another, than to mark the general characteristics of the poetry of our time; and my position is complicated by the fact that I write a little myself. For the writer of verse is not always the best judge of the verse of his contemporaries: he may overrate those who are moved by a similar spirit to his own, and misunderstand those whose spirit, though equally modern, is different. For these reasons I am diffident about discussing modern poetry directly, either as a whole or in detail. So I want to approach it indirectly: by putting before you certain views about English poetry in general, and its history in the last four or five hundred years, which, I hope, may help to explain its general situation today, and the general reasons why it is as it is.

When I speak of general characteristics of English poetry, I do not propose to concern myself with the characteristics which English poets have in common with other Englishmen, and of which they may be the more or less unconscious mouthpieces. I am not concerned with the expression of an ethos, any more than I am with an interest in wild birds, a fondness for dogs, or a taste for roast beef. I am concerned only with the nature of the English language which the poets have had in common, and with the peculiarities, advantages and limitations which characterise any particular language; and to some extent with the differences between the use of that language in different places – for, in order to understand what has been going on in English poetry, that is, poetry in the English language, in our time, we must take into account the differences in the use of that language in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the United States.

So, to begin with, it is a commonplace observation, that most languages which develop a literature begin with poetry: the evolution of prose form belongs to a later stage. It is obvious that before there is a written language, and compositions have to be memorised and recited, there is a practical advantage in verse, because it is easier to memorise than prose. No doubt there are other, and profounder reasons. My point is simply that every language has its peculiar rhythms – more than that, its peculiar music. The languages of cognate origin will develop similar, but not identical, verse rhythms. I use the term "music" here to indicate that which makes verse beautiful to hear, and which escapes the rules of prosody. The difference between the music of one modern European language and another is at first concealed from us, as children (at least, in English-speaking countries) by the abstract rules of long and short, or stressed and unstressed syllables, of feet and metres with Greek names, according to which we were taught to dissect, and rather stumblingly to put together, lines of poetry. These rules were based on the work of Latin and Greek grammarians. Now there are two stages of remoteness of these rules. The first is that Latin is a very different language from Greek, and that what we find in Latin poetry is probably a Greek scheme of versification imposed on a native Latin rhythm, a rhythm [which] tends to come to the surface again in late Latin poetry, passing into Italian. The second is that the Celtic and Northern tongues are different from Latin. It is suggestive that a great authority on English grammar, Professor Otto Jespersen, has pointed out that the traditional system of our grammar has been largely an attempt to squeeze the forms into Latin classifications – that, for instance, the moods of the English verb do not correspond precisely to the Latin indicative and subjunctive.[1]

I am not, however, suggesting that it is necessary to discover a new system of prosody for modern European languages, with variations for each language, though a study of the "musical" differences between cognate languages would be interesting. I believe that a knowledge of rules of scansion could only take one a very little way in learning to write poetry in one's own language, however helpful it may be in teaching us to compose artificial verses in a dead language. A system which provided something more like musical notation, with division into bars rather than feet, might be useful in teaching the appreciation of poetry, simply because it would counteract the rigidity of the scheme by which we have been taught to read verse in the past. But in order to write poetry, a sensitive ear and much reading are what matter – not necessarily very wide reading, but a complete absorption of some great poetry. And if one can acquire knowledge of another modern language besides one's own, and of great poetry in it, enough to enjoy that poetry in the respects in which its music differs from that of one's own language, so much the better: for to appreciate another language helps us to appreciate our own.

My main point, however, was that every language has its peculiar verse music. If that is so, it follows that the peculiar music of English poetry is due to the peculiar mixture of racial rhythms present in it. I should be very much surprised if the rhythms of Celtic, Saxon, Scandinavian and Norman French had not all combined in the composition of English poetry, as they have all contributed to the language itself. They may not be combined in the same proportions in the work of any two poets. And this is not the whole story. There have gone to the making of English poetry direct literary influences also, as in the relation of Chaucer to France, and of the Elizabethans to Italy; and there has been also the important influence of the traditional classical education. The influence of Latin poetry especially

– and I am speaking, you understand, primarily of the sound of English poetry, not of its subject matter – has been very great. The most conspicuous example of this is Milton – a great scholar, and a considerable Latin poet in his day. What I have in mind is not deliberate attempts to write English verse in Latin metres – attempts which have been made, and which have seldom resulted in anything but curiosities of literature – but the saturation with Latin poetry of the mind of a great poet writing in English metres. Without some knowledge of Latin, we miss a great deal in the poetry of Milton. And in addition to these historical influences, we must take account, in English poetry, of the continuous interaction and reciprocal influence of three or four different peoples living in one island, together with the influences from Ireland and from over sea. To such diversity of origins and influences is partly attributable the somewhat confusing variety of style and idiom found to-day.

So far I have only referred to the ingredients of the language, and to the influence of different parts of the English-speaking world upon each other. There is another consideration to take account of: and that is the fact that no language, unless it be a very primitive one, stays still. The spoken language is constantly in change: the vocabulary changes, the construction changes, the inflexion of speech changes; and the changes in the spoken language usually precede those in the written language. The style which is natural and easy for one generation, becomes artificial and affected for another. It does not matter, of course, that the style in which a masterpiece was written should inevitably go out of date: what matters is the relation which that style had to the spoken language of the time in which it was written. When the idiom of the written language has lagged too far behind that of the language spoken, a kind of revolution and renovation has to take place, if that language is to continue to produce literature. The most conspicuous revolution of this kind in English poetry, is that announced by the famous prefaces with which Wordsworth introduced his early poems.[2] The eighteenth century, up to the appearance of the *Lyrical Ballads*, had been dominated by the influence of two poets of the seventeenth century: Milton and Dryden. There were of course exceptions, such as Blake and Burns; but it was Wordsworth who reformed the language. Wordsworth did not see his revolution quite in the historical perspective in which we can see it now: he thought that he was rebelling against artificiality, and returning to the speech of simple humble people.[3] What he was really doing was creating a poetic idiom in relation to the way in which educated people of his time were talking: an idiom which, with considerable variations, has dominated English poetry up to our own time. But the mode of writing against which he reacted, was itself largely the outcome of a revolution previously carried out by Dryden. A style of verse which, when it was originated by John Donne had been – as Donne's poems still sound to us – remarkably close to speech, had become by the middle of the seventeenth century so artificial and exaggerated as to be ridiculous; and Dryden, a century before Wordsworth, had brought poetry up to date. And the natural idiom which Wordsworth introduced, in his turn, had become in turn exhausted, artificial, and remote from our speech at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The poets who are responsible for these renovations of the poetic language, for bringing poetry up to date with the speech of their own time, are not necessarily the greatest. They are simply those who, happening to be born into a time at which such a change is necessary, find the new way of writing suitable for that time. No poetry, of course, is an exact reproduction of the language as the poet hears it talked about him: but it has to be in a convention so suited to its time that the reader could exclaim: "that is the way I should talk if I could talk poetry." That is the reason why at certain periods contemporary poetry has a real value and excitement for its readers which no poetry of the past can have, and which that poetry itself will not have for a later generation – it is ourselves talking. And to give this feeling of excitement and satisfaction, it is much more important that a poet should use the same idiom as his readers, than that he should say things that they can agree with, or even understand.

This is, then, one function of the poet, or rather of certain poets at certain times. Their material is the language as they hear it spoken about them: their task is to make a literary language out of the spoken language, and at the [same] time to preserve the purity of that language and to refine what is impure; at the same time to make it new and to preserve it from deterioration.

What happens, or what should happen, in the periods in between these revolutions? It would not be healthy, even in literature, to live in a state of perpetual revolution; all standards and canons would disappear and the only criterion of excellence would be novelty. Nor do we want our spoken language to change so rapidly that every generation of poets has to spend all its energy in catching up with it. It seems to me that when an idiom has been stabilised in a new relation to speech, the task of the next generation or two is to develop the musical possibilities latent in the new idiom, much as the disciples of a great scientific discoverer may explore, in one direction or another, the consequences of a great discovery. It is for this reason that I have called this lecture "Poetry, Speech and Music." When one comes to give examples, Shakespeare presents us with rather an awkward problem, for he was so great, in the history of the English language, that he was able to unite the two functions of the poet.[4†] In the first half of his work he appears to be gradually developing the stiff, limited, and rhetorical vehicle of blank verse – as it was when he took it up – into an infinitely supple medium in which both the most intense poetry and the most commonplace sentence could be expressed with equal naturalness – he was developing a language in which he could say anything that he wanted to say in dramatic conversation. In his later plays – after *Antony and Cleopatra* – he seems, having mastered colloquial speech, to be directing his attention to elaborating; to discovering how complicated, how delicate, how varied he could make the music of his verse without losing touch with the spoken language altogether and without his characters ceasing to be human beings. It was a work, so to speak, of supererogation but not of superfluity. This is the poet of *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles* and *The Tempest*. But among other poets, I would instance Donne, Dryden and Wordsworth as innovators and revolutionists; Milton, Pope and Tennyson as elaborators: the former concerned with speech, the latter with music. Each type may have its faults. We may sometimes think that Milton, in exploring the orchestral music of language, ceases to talk a social idiom at all; we may sometimes think that Wordsworth, in attempting to restore a social idiom, overstepped the mark and became pedestrian; but it is often true that only by going too far can we find out how far we can go; and one has to be a very great poet to be in danger of committing these excesses in this way.

A manifesto issued by the "Imagist" group in London in 1913 (several years, I may mention, before I made the acquaintance of any of the poets concerned) announced a programme of six points, the first of which was "to use the language of common speech."[5] This [is] substantially the same declaration (so far as form is concerned) as that of Wordsworth. Poets who find themselves in the historical situation of Wordsworth in 1798 and of these imagists in 1913, may erect the necessity of that situation into a general law, and affirm that all poetry, at all times, should be judged by that particular test of its relation to the speech of its own time. It is equally natural for poets finding the other situation, for poets beginning to write at a time when a new relation of poetry to speech has just been established, to regard that new idiom, which it is their business to develop, as the permanent language of poetry. Looking back, I can see that I myself held the first of these two views, and that it was inevitable; and that perhaps a more comprehensive and balanced view would not have been helpful to us in attempting to cope with the task of the time. The alternation of these two necessary attitudes towards poetry goes a good way, I think, to explain the fluctuations of popular taste concerning our poets of the past, and it is worth while, in passing, to call attention to this element in the history of taste and criticism.

Poets exercise influence upon the current popularity of their predecessors both directly and indirectly. Indirectly, because the innovators of one time will have a certain affinity with the innovators of another; and as the popularity of a living poet established itself, it will tend to stimulate an appreciation of earlier poets of the same type. Similarly, the popularity of a living elaborator will tend to draw sympathetic attention to the earlier elaborators. Poets exert some influence directly, because, as I have said, they naturally champion those earlier poets from whom they have themselves derived sustenance and with whom they feel a warm sympathy. Very frequently, poets express their critical appreciations in print; and when they are themselves accepted as poets, their views acquire a certain authority. I should be the last to wish to demolish this authority; but I consider it only honest to point out that the critical opinions of poets owe their value to the fact that they are *not* wholly disinterested. What poets say about poetry, and about other poets, has to be taken in relation to the kind of poetry they themselves write; for we are perpetually, and by no means always consciously, trying to defend the kind of poetry we write ourselves, or to formulate the kind of poetry we want to write. Especially when young, the poet is, in his criticism, not so much a judge as an advocate – and an advocate, I may add, has just as respectable a role as a judge: so long as we do not mistake one for the other, this is all to the good. And I believe that the fluctuation of popular taste regarding the poets of the past is a healthy thing too: it is a sign of life. In the hall of literary fame, so to speak, there accumulates a permanent exhibition of statues; but each generation appoints new curators, and these curators simply rearrange the positions of the statues to suit the taste of the day.

I have spoken at some length on what may at first seem to you to be a side-issue, or an interesting parenthesis; but this is really relevant to my attempt to outline the historical perspective in which we should see the poetry of my generation and of the last twenty-five years – and, incidentally, to account for the preference of poets during that time, and of their immediate public, for such poets of the past as Chaucer, Donne, Dryden (to some extent), Blake and Wordsworth.[6†] It is the first time I have tried to put the situation in this way, and indeed, it is only relatively recently that I have begun to see it in this way: if I could have foreseen, twenty-five years ago, that I should be saying all this to-day I should have been very much surprised and perhaps a little shocked. But on the whole I am glad that it is the person I was then, who would have been shocked by the views I have now, instead of being shocked to-day by the contemplation of what I thought then.

I now, at any rate, incline to the opinion that poetry has two necessary and dangerous tasks, the collocation of which appears paradoxical: that of getting as close to ordinary speech as possible, and that of getting as far away from it as possible. If we go too far in one direction, what we write ceases to be poetry; if we go too far in the other, it ceases to be speech – and therefore, ceasing to communicate, also ceases to be poetry. When our effort is in the direction of common speech, then the "music" of the verse consists apparently in eliciting the music of common speech, by selection and emphasis, the music of our speech of which we are ordinarily unaware because we are too accustomed to it, and because we are ordinarily using that speech for practical purposes. When our effort is in the direction of elaboration, the effect may be described rather as music speaking to us, than as speech being musical.

There is of course a danger, which should be mentioned at this point, in employing the term "music" at all. I do not know of any other English word, and I do not believe that any other language has another word. But in using it, we must be on guard against assuming that it is the aim, the futile aim, of poetry to perform the same function as "music" in the musician's sense. If so, why write poetry – if it is only trying to do what another art can do better? So when I described the effect of certain kinds of poetry as that of "music speaking to us," I said that because I did not wish to ignore the capital importance, in poetry, of the meaning – and of that kind of meaning (for here again, words are difficult to deal with, and I am not suggesting that music is meaningless) for which language was invented. There are of course, several levels of meaning, especially in poetry: the purpose of that difficult French poet Mallarmé seems to me to have been to select the poetic levels of meaning and omit altogether, or omit more than any other poet has, of the prose meaning. But I am not confining the elaborators of speech to such extreme cases: I include Milton, who, if any poet, had a very serious intellectual and theological message to convey. The type of poet which I have called the elaborator is by no means more indifferent to meaning than the innovator; and I am by no means equating the music of poetry with virtuosity.

It is in reference to the scheme I have tried to put before you, of the alternating directions of poetry at different times, that I should like to expose any opinion about what is called "free verse." In the normal music of English verse, I believe that the life of the versification is due to two kinds of stress working both against each other and with each other: the regular recurring stresses and pauses the analysis of which is the province of prosody proper, and the stresses of the speaking voice intent upon the meaning.[7†] In English, of course, perhaps more than in most other languages, the sense of the phrases is conveyed by emphasis and intonation, as in the simple difference between the question "where are you?" and the question "where are you?" so that there is always a latitude of interpretation and differences of meaning which can be elicited, in the speaking of many lines, a latitude which the poet must allow for. Verse ranges between two extremes, that of a dull jog trot when the speech stress is too completely subordinated to the regular measure, and that of prose when the regular measure is suppressed in favour of the speech stress. Between these extremes, both of which represent failure, there are many degrees. Even in the most regular verse we should be aware of a tension between the two rhythms: and also, it follows, in the most irregular verse there should be the shadow of regularity. According to this view – which I have succeeded in holding for a good many years – no good verse is completely free or completely bound.[8] What follows from this looks curiously paradoxical: that it requires greater skill of craftsmanship to write verse at either extreme than it does to write verse which is half and half. To write verse of the polished regularity of that of Alexander Pope, verse in which, so much of the time, the speech stress seems to submit itself with complete docility to the regular metre, that is the work of a master. For when we analyse a passage of Pope, we find more constant tension between the two systems than at first appears: the art of Pope consists in making minimal contrasts necessary. It follows also that good "free verse" is very difficult to write: there is very little of it. That is verse in which there is always just enough suggestion of a regular metre – it may be so faint that the reader will be unable to say what the metre is.

No one has better cause to know than I, how much bad prose has been written, in the last quarter of a century, under the name of free verse; or how difficult it is to convince its authors that there was anything wrong with it. There is, in a good poem, an inner unity and wholeness, as well as that imposed by the form in which it is written; and where the author relies primarily or, as he does in "free verse," solely upon the inner form, upon the crystallization of the idea, the mood, or the pattern of ideas and moods, then any failure of this unification is all the more painful and fatal.

I do not wish to give the impression that there is any necessary parallel between the two pairs of opposites of which I have been speaking. It does not necessarily follow that a period of modernization of the poetic idiom will be a period of "free verse," or that a period of "elaboration" will be a period of set metrical patterns. But I think that it was natural that my own particular period, in its search for the accents of modern speech, should have made great use of "free verse." The freedom, so-called, was a diminution of the set rhythm, and an emphasis upon the other rhythm, that of the speaking voice with something to say, and it fitted in with the desire to do away with the purely decorative, the filling up with superfluous or imprecise words for the sake of completing a line or making a rhyme. It might indeed be more accurately described as "abstraction" than "freedom"; comparable to the insistence, even exaggeration of certain essential elements of structure by abstract painting. And it should not be thought of, as perhaps it was by some of its less expert practitioners, as an emancipation from strictness; but rather as a phase in the conquest of a new strictness. It was a revolt against dead form, and an insistence upon the inner unity which is unique to every real poem and because of which we may say that the poem comes before the form, in growing out of the attempt of somebody to say something – just as a system of prosody is only a formulation of the identities in the rhythms of a succession of poets influencing each other.

So far, all that I have said about speech and music might be taken to concern the poem only as a succession of lines; and it is time for a reminder that both the speech quality and the music of a poem are not merely a matter of one good line after another, but of the structure of the poem as a whole. For a poem is not merely a melody or a wandering air; it has to have a pattern analogous to the structure of a piece of music. The most obvious patterns are those such as the sonnet, the formal ode, the ballade, the villanelle, rondeau or sestina. It is sometimes assumed that modern poetry has swept away, as artificial, such forms as these. I have seen signs of a return to them, with variations, now that poets are more at ease with modern English speech; and I believe that the tendency to return to set forms is something recurrent, as natural as the impulse to make a refrain or a chorus to a popular song. But it must be kept in mind that some forms are more appropriate to some languages than to others, and any form may be more suitable for one period than for another. Furthermore, at a time when one poetic movement is becoming exhausted, the formal element is apt to be exaggerated by the last followers of that movement, and when an idiom is going out of date, its feebleness is most evident in these set patterns. The more elaborate a stanza form is, the more rules to be observed in its proper execution, the more firmly it becomes fixed to the speech of the moment of its perfection. It becomes discredited and employed solely by those writers who, having no fresh impulse to form within them, have recourse to pouring their liquid sentiment into a ready-made mold in which they vainly hope that it will set. In a perfect sonnet, what you notice is not so much the writer's skill in adapting his content to the form, as his skill in making the pattern comply with what he has to say: our pleasure is in the appearance of a perfect and natural fitness. The rest is virtuosity, the attempt to arouse the emotion of the reader by reminding him of the ways in which dead poets have really done it. So any particular form has to be laid aside from time to time. Or it has to be broken and remade. But formless poetry is not poetry: at best, it can only be notes for a possible poem. There are the unbreakable laws imposed by the language itself. For any language, so long as it remains the same language, imposes its own restrictions and permits its own licence, dictates its speech rhythms and its sound patterns.

At what stage a generation much younger than mine inherits the English language, I am not able to say. It may be that the re-adaptation of the poetic idiom to current speech is not yet complete; or it may be that the poetic language has become stabilised for a couple of generations. If I am inclined to the latter guess, that may be only because a middle-aged poet, having done all that he has been capable of in one direction, and casting about for directions in which to explore, becomes more interested in musical analogies and the possibilities of new and more elaborate patterns. I should like at this point, and somewhat abruptly, to pay a tribute to the work of a great predecessor and contemporary, William Butler Yeats. He was born just in time to become part of the last phase of a literary movement, a decorated and elaborate phase. Looking back at the work of his youth, in the last decade of the last century, one would have said that there were one or two of his contemporaries who were more likely to break the conventions of that age than he. He was, in that style, a poet of international reputation before I began to write. I think there are few more remarkable histories of development in the whole of poetry: by 1919 he had developed his style so as to be a contemporary, and an advanced contemporary, of the youngest poets then appearing in print. He was still a contemporary eighteen years after that. When most poets, even great ones, would have been repeating themselves, or silent, Yeats was still inventing and exploring.[9] His example to young poets may be summed up in the recommendation: always reject everything you have written except the most recent – you must continue to believe in that, for a time, as a stepping stone to a further stage at which you will reject it. I do not think that posterity will say that his work deeply affected the course of poetry in England or America. The music of Irish speech is not quite the same as that of English, though the language is formally the same: we could not take over its rhythms. Nor, perhaps, was the task of eliciting the natural poetry of it so formidable as that of eliciting the natural poetry of English in England – a country so much more industrialised and newspaper-ised; but we must honour Yeats for carrying on the same battle in another area.

But what I see for the future – I am not prophesying, either for myself or for other living poets, but only giving the answer of the moment to the question which forever presents itself: what is to be done next? – is what I call musical elaboration. How much technical knowledge of music may be profitable to a poet I cannot say, for I have not that technical knowledge myself. I think that it might be dangerous for a poet to try to work too closely to the analogy of musical form; for we can easily deceive ourselves with words and forget that it is a different music. But I believe that the musical sensibility most important for the poet is the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure. As for rhythm, I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem – and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself – may adumbrate itself first as a particular rhythm like a musical phrase before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image. And when I say the structure, I mean something beyond stanza form or metre or rhyme scheme – I mean the pattern of ideas and images which cannot be identical for two different poems, as well: the unity of outer and inner form. There are, for instance, possibilities of recurrence and variation in a poem which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; possibilities of a kind of counterpoint; and of transitions and contrasts such as those between the different movements of a quartet. I can at least imagine poems in which ideas, imagery and moods seemingly disparate and previously unrelated are united into a whole which is more than the sum of the parts: and what I am imagining is perhaps no more than another "Lycidas."[10] We cannot do better than that, but with three centuries between, we must do something very different to do anything comparable – for we must take our language at the stage in which we find it.[11†]

Among the other surprising things that a verse-writer learns when he begins to try to write for the theatre, are the things that he learns from writing verse to be spoken by a chorus. To speak of the place of a chorus in poetic drama, of its possibilities and of its limitations, is outside of my present purpose. But in trying to write choral verse, one learns that a chorus must be designed, from the start, for a particular number of voices of particular kinds, just as a musical composition is designed for a particular selection of instruments and no other. One learns the importance of the partition of lines between the different voices, and the importance of designing a line differently when it is to be spoken by several voices, or by the whole chorus, and when it is to be spoken by one voice alone. And one learns what sort of material is suitable for choral speaking and what is not. I do not say that I have learned how to write a good chorus; but in trying to write choral verse I have learned a good deal about poetry; and a good deal which I believe has been of use to me in writing verse for one voice alone, and that primarily my own. It is part of the training in the use of rhythms and in structure which a poet can get in the theatre.

At this stage, I feel that I owe a word of apology. It may seem strange to any audience, that in a talk supposed to be concerned with modern English poetry and its place in relation to the poetry of the past, I have said nothing at all about subject-matter, or of the "view of life" taken by modern poets. That ideas matter in poetry; that the degree of wisdom, of insight, of experience of men and books manifested in a poet's work forms a large part of the measure of his greatness, is something which cannot be denied, and which is too obvious even to assert. But I have been concerned, not with analysing the work and the minds of individual poets, but with a generation. The ideas, or more exactly, the vision of life of any one poet matters, because it is integral to his expression of it. This vision is individual and not collective, and the ideas and opinions which poets of one time share are a concern of sociology rather than of literature. Besides, it is only in a longer historical perspective that we can observe the common state of mind at all clearly; and meanwhile, the surest test of the work of a contemporary poet is how he writes, rather than what he writes about. For the poet's special function is to contribute to the development and to maintain the quality, of the language in which he writes; to maintain and to extend its capacity to express a wide range, and subtle gradation, of feeling and emotion, and so to maintain the quality of the civilization for which that language is the instrument.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In "History of the English Language Considered in Its Relation to Other Subjects" (1908), for example, Jespersen writes: "The exaggerated importance attached to Latin is also injurious to the study of English if it causes forms and constructions to be *valued* according to a Latin standard. Some authors, Milton and Dryden among them, have impaired their English prose by thinking too much of Latin syntax instead of trusting to their natural linguistic instinct, and similarly some grammarians are apt to despise such English idioms as are contrary to Latin rules." TSE discusses the artificiality of the English subjunctive – referring primarily to H. W. Fowler but also to Jespersen – in his 1927 review "Grammar and Usage" (3.10-11).

2. The prefaces to the second and third editions of *Lyrical Ballads* (1801, 1802) articulate Wordsworth and Coleridge's convictions about the nature of poetry, poetic language, and composition.

3. *Lyrical Ballads*, according to Wordsworth, employed "the language really used by men." The speech of rural life, he argued, was superior to "that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression."

4†. The four sentences that follow (ending with "*Pericles* and *The Tempest*") are canceled in the TS.

5. Amy Lowell, preface to *Some Imagist Poets: An Anthology* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), vi. TSE conflates the early Imagist documents in *Poetry* magazine, dating to early 1913, with Lowell's later summation of Imagist principles. In claiming that "several years" passed before he "made the acquaintance of any of the poets concerned," he also detaches Pound – whom he met in Sept 1914 – from the Imagist group.

6†. The remainder of this paragraph is canceled in the TS.

7†. The following sentence is canceled in the TS.

8. TSE expresses this idea as early as 1917 in "Reflections on *Vers Libre*," arguing that formal verse at its best is "constantly withdrawing from" a pattern, while free verse at its best is "constantly approximating to" it. "It is this contrast between fixity and flux . . . which is the very life of verse" (1.513).

9. TSE commented similarly on Yeats's development in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1935: "I can think of no poet, not even among the very greatest, who has shown a longer period

of development than Yeats. At no time was he less out-of-date than today, among men twenty and forty years his juniors. Development to this extent is not merely genius, it is character; and it sets a standard which his juniors should seek to emulate, without hoping to equal" (5.260). He develops this theme in his 1941 Yeats Memorial Lecture as well (6.79-82).

10. "Lycidas" (1637), Milton's famous pastoral elegy.

11†. The following paragraph is canceled in the TS.

An Issue of *The Christian News-Letter*[1]

The Christian News-Letter, 141 (8 July 1942) [1-4]

Dear Member,

An absence of five weeks, in a foreign country which one is visiting for the first time, is not for me the best preparation for replacing the Editor of the *News-Letter* even for one number.[2] To receive no correspondence, to be unable to read the newspapers, and to see English papers only several days after publication, arouses a feeling of ignorance about events at home which persists for some time after return. The recent statement issued by the Joint Committee of "Religion and Life" and "The Sword of the Spirit" is one which calls for comment in these columns: but as a member of that committee, and moreover as one who was unable to attend the meetings immediately preceding the issue of the statement, I am not the best person to introduce the discussion.[3] And as for affairs in Sweden, I cannot supplement what you have already been told by the Bishop of Chichester.[4] I must turn to events which have taken place in my absence, or soon after my return, which I have not yet had the opportunity of discussing with those who are better informed than myself.

EDUCATION AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES

The Liberal Education Advisory Committee on post-war education has just published its report under the title of "Education for All"; and the Labour Party Conference has discussed a resolution on educational reform.[5] The Labour Party does not appear to have so far published any document: we must also await a statement from the Conservative Party before drawing our conclusions. But the field covered, and the recommendations made, by Liberal and Labour, are so similar as to provoke comment even at this stage.

It is certainly desirable that the political parties should give increased attention to the problems of education, and that they should state their official views about reforms to be made. Our first feeling is certain to be one of satisfaction at finding so much agreement. If all parties agree upon certain principles and consequently upon certain reforms, the problems of education (we believe) will be considered in an atmosphere clear of the passions of party politics. It would be intolerable if educational policy were to be reversed with every change of government: it is most regrettable (as was mentioned in the course of the discussion in Committee of the House of Commons) that the Presidency of the Board of Education should have changed hands so often in the past during the tenure of one government.[6] Everyone must desire continuity of policy. But there are obscure dangers in agreement upon programme, even as there is obvious mischief in lack of continuity. It would certainly be deplorable if there were not many points of reform upon which everyone was in accord: there are changes the desirability, even the necessity, of which no one could question. That teachers should neither be overworked nor underpaid, that the number of pupils in the classroom should be smaller, are instances of such obvious reasonableness that they need no examination. Yet, if a political party has a political philosophy at all – if it is something more than an aggregation of interests – we may find it surprising that this political philosophy should have no bearing whatever upon its educational policy. An absence of important differences might be taken to mean that education was an area beyond politics – or, to be more precise, that we were all united upon certain principles, and that our divergences only began in more limited departments of their application. Or it might mean that we tacitly conspired to ignore all differences of principle. It might mean, not that education was above political issues, but that it was treated as something not worth making an issue of; that the common proposals consisted rather of such as seemed likely to commend themselves to the electorate than of common conclusions from common principles; and that the parties were, so to speak, paired off (if three can pair off) for a division which would not take place. If we are to be truly non-party in our educational reforms, it is not enough to confine our programme to the points on which we have no trouble in agreeing. There is always the possibility that a point of view which has not appeared in the formulae, which has not even been consciously recognized, may come into operation when the programme is applied; and that a common programme, which appears to be only a formulation of what the public appears at the moment to want, may become a very different thing in the hands of politicians of different political allegiance. I am not saying that this is what is happening, but only that it is always a danger to be intelligently faced.

It is not that I am objecting to any of the detailed proposals of either the Liberal or the Labour Party – so far as I have understood them. There are phrases, certainly, which leave much to the imagination. It is not immediately clear, for instance, what fruit the Liberal conception of the public school, as "an integral part of the national system," would bear, or what the "common code of regulations" which the Labour Party would impose upon all schools for children over eleven would comprehend (why not for schools for children under eleven?).[7] But I do not wish to fiddle with questions like these; and there are others, such as that of the standardization of the school-leaving age, which demand more professional knowledge and experience than I possess. What is striking is the apparent assumption by both parties – and there seems no reason to expect that the Conservative view will be any different – of a quantitative rather than a qualitative standard. That is to say, the assumption that education is a commodity with the nature of which we are all familiar; that it is sometimes offered in an adulterated form, and that the conditions in the factories are not always satisfactory; but that the chief problem is a shortage in the market and inefficient distribution – that the chief problem is to provide more of it for more people. This is indeed a problem, but it is not the only one.

THE OTHER PROBLEM

In our zeal for social justice we must not forget that a society is something more than the total number of people living in the same place at the same time and talking the same language: it is something which has a past and a future. It is an organic growth, the future of which is directed by its past. A common notion during modern times has been that people could be divided into those whose care was to preserve, and those whose interest was to initiate – the former being conservatives and the latter radicals. The usual weakness of the radical has been, not that he only looks ahead, but that he does not look ahead far enough: the usual fault of the conservative, not that he looks back, but that he keeps his eyes shut. If we look at the matter in this way, we will be aware of cultural values to be preserved – not out of sentimental piety towards the past, but out of solicitude for the future. The idea that there may be cultural values worth preserving, and that these values may not inevitably be able to look after themselves, does not seem to take a prominent place in our views of educational reform. One example of the way in which they are affected appears in the course of the discussion in Committee of the House of Commons – a discussion conducted on a commendably high level. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education observed: "Let us be sure of this, that if classics are to remain one of the essential subjects for admission there will be no recruitment from the elementary schools into the public schools."[8] Now this raises the question (which was not discussed) whether it is or is not a bad thing, from the point of view of classical scholarship, that boys should postpone elementary Latin and Greek until the age of entering public schools; the question whether classical scholarship matters; the question whether Latin should be taught in elementary schools; the question whether it matters more that the standards of classical scholarship should be maintained, or that access from elementary schools to public schools should be encouraged. I am not asserting confidently that I know the answers to these questions: only that they are questions to be considered before we make our plans for reform. I hope that we shall not consciously or unconsciously drift towards the view that it is better for everybody to have a second-rate education, than for only a small minority to have the best. For the first problem of education, surely, is to elaborate, preserve and develop the best education for the superior minority. The second problem is that of the selection of the minority to receive it. I say the second problem, because I think it is better that the best education should be given to an ill-chosen minority than that it should not be given at all.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD

A point which was made by several speakers during the discussion in the House of Commons (16th June) was that responsibilities properly within the province of the Board of Education were at present undertaken by other ministries. Apart from the technical training of the Army, Navy and Air Force (which was not in question) and the war-time organizations for the entertainment and general education of the troops (which were not mentioned) there are branches administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mines.[9] It was argued from several sides – and as the contention was not contested, I accept it – that these departments of education should be brought within the control of the Board: it was even suggested that the Board of Education should be converted into a "Ministry for Youth and Education."[10]

Certainly from the point of view of those who like to preserve the meanings of words, the change has much to recommend it. The term "education" has undergone a vast extension of meaning in the last hundred years: the number of possible pictures of actual human beings being variously trained, which the word can suggest, must be immensely greater than the number which it could have suggested to the minds of our great-grandfathers. In this extension of meaning there is always the danger of some loss as well: a word which is coming to connote the provision of milk and dental attention may become too fatigued by its extra duties to include conversation with the best minds of the ancient world.

It is worth while also, perhaps, to enquire how this process has come about. We readily persuade ourselves that a relative improvement is an absolute good: and that what is, to a large degree, worthy of approval as making the best of a bad job, is really a step towards a millennial condition. The best recommendation of democracy is perhaps to be found, not in its actual or potential achievements, but in the failures and misdemeanours of despots and oligarchs. Similarly, the pressure towards extension of the domain of "education" has come largely from the break-down of previous ways of life. We are sometimes told by dieticians that a people which eats the right food has very little need of dentists. But it is easier to develop dental science to its present perfection than to alter people's way of life so as to provide them with the right food; and when the teeth of a people have become as perishable as English teeth commonly are, the only step possible is to provide dentistry in the schools and ultimately perhaps in adult education institutions. In admiring the progress of dentistry we can still regret that we have not better teeth; and in admiring the limitless scope of education we may in some particulars regret its necessity. An ideal society, we may remember, would not be one in which the State controlled the activity of all of its members from birth to the grave, but one in which such control was unnecessary. Our concern about religious education is increased by the knowledge that the majority of children get little or nothing in that way at home: an exceptionally devout, able, instructed and popular teacher can do something to repair the ravages caused by the lack of moderately devout, intelligent, instructed and affectionate parents. The necessity for care and supervision of youths in the group fourteen to eighteen (and a crying necessity it appears to be) has a great deal to do with an industrial system which may or may not be the best possible, with the loss of apprenticeship, with the absence of employments the learning and practice of which is itself of educational value, with the lack of any social shape to the communities of to-day whether industrial or agricultural. I am not able to suggest any one remedy for this state of affairs which would alleviate the burden, likely to become heavier, of future Presidents of the Board of Education – or the burden on everybody, and a heavy burden it is for most human beings, of having to struggle for many years of life with the impositions of formal instruction and training. I only suggest that in this vast blooming, buzzing confusion we should still maintain sight of that kind of education which would be necessary even in the most perfect society: the training of the superior few to superior wisdom and even to holiness.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

While education has a potent influence in shaping the culture of a nation, it is itself shaped by that culture, upon which in turn other influences play. We cannot rely upon educational development alone to improve the quality of our culture, or even to arrest its decay when it is decaying. In a recent correspondence in *The Times* concerned with the increased addiction to astrology and divination – always a tendency in times of stress – Mr. Tom Harrisson has an interesting letter in which he refers to this addiction as "symptomatic of the wide decline in spirituality over the past decades."[11] I cannot share the confidence of a later correspondent who finds the cure for astrology in Adult Education.[12] Adult Education might equip people for preparing their own horoscopes, or it might replace superstition with a shallow rationalism: it all depends upon what people want their education for. The majority of readers of this *News-Letter* may not be habitual readers of sensational fiction; and so may be surprised by my suggesting that the lower levels of fiction may sometimes provide better clues to contemporary morals and manners than those with greater literary pretensions. Between the novels of such writers as Rider Haggard and Anthony Hope, and the popular fiction of the 1920's, a deterioration had already taken place:[13] I have in mind a series of which the hero was a demobilized officer, of prodigious physique, courage and resourcefulness, whose attitude towards women was always impeccably chivalrous, but who sometimes employed rather brutal methods for noble ends.[14] Since that time, the chivalry has tended to disappear: I have in mind a much more recent series of novels, which incline me to believe that the history of gangster warfare in Chicago, and subsequently that of German outrages, have contributed to a further blunting of the public sensibility. To attempt to suppress this sort of literature would be silly: but to ignore it would be obtuse.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The text of this entire issue was written by TSE as guest editor. J. H. Oldham, who produced the *CN-L* weekly, relied on TSE and other friends to stand in for him when he took a vacation.

2. TSE returned from a five-week lecture tour in Sweden, undertaken on behalf of the British Council, on 24 May 1942.

3. On TSE's involvement with the Joint Committee, and on its public declaration of 28 May, see the "Foundational statement of the Joint Standing Committee of Religion and Life and the Sword of the Spirit" (6.802, n.1). The committee's purpose, as announced in the statement, was to "unite informed and convinced Christians all over the country in common action on broad lines of social and international policy." TSE's participation was interrupted by his trip to Sweden.

4. George Bell (1883-1958), the "exceptionally enlightened Bishop of Chichester" – as TSE called him in a letter of 1 Jan 1936 to his brother, Henry – arranged the poet's participation in the creation of *The Rock* in 1934 and commissioned *Murder in the Cathedral* for the 1935 Canterbury Festival. Like TSE, Bell had recently returned from a monthlong visit to Sweden, and he accepted an invitation from Oldham to share his observations on the condition of the people and the Church there. Bell's comments appeared in the *CN-L* of 24 June 1942 [1-4].

5. *Education for All: The Report of the Liberal Education Advisory Committee* (London: Liberal Publication Dept., 1942). The report calls for equality of opportunity, centralization and standardization, reform in the training of teachers, and the raising of the school-leaving age to sixteen. At its 1942 Party Conference, held in London, 25-28 May, Labour endorsed a substantially similar platform.

6. Throughout this newsletter, TSE refers to the discussion of education policy in the House of Commons on 16 June 1942 (Hansard vol 380, cols 1387-485). The rapid turnover in the presidency of the Board of Education is first mentioned there by Edward Cobb, a Conservative member (col 1437), and subsequently by the Conservative Robert Morgan (col 1438-39) and the Independent Progressive (originally Liberal) Edmund Harvey (cols 1441, 1445).

7. *Education for All* asserts: "The Public Schools should be preserved, but maintained as an integral and essential part of the national system of education. Their advantages and amenities should become available to all children likely to benefit by the training they afford, irrespective of the financial and social position of their parents" (15). A resolution passed unanimously at the Labour Party Conference called for "All schools for children over eleven to be brought under a common code of regulations for Secondary Schools with common standards of accommodation, staffing, etc."

8. TSE quotes James Chuter Ede, a Labourite and former teacher (col 1477). The question of whether the elite public schools should be open to all children of ability was an important focus of the ongoing debate over education.

9. TSE here summarizes a point argued by Charles Ammon, a Labour member (cols 1423-24).

10. National Labourite Kenneth Lindsay proposed the expansion and elevation of the Board of Education to a "Ministry of Youth and Childhood." As he observed, Labour, Liberal, and Conservative members had already spoken in favor of unifying control of education in a single Department (cols 1456-57).

11. Tom Harrisson (1911-76), English anthropologist and curator, was director and co-founder of Mass Observation, an organization that used crowd-sourcing techniques to survey everyday British life.

Running from 29 May to 22 June 1942, the correspondence in the *Times* centered on the question of whether newspaper astrologists posed a danger to the war effort by prognosticating on international developments and inculcating fatalism. In "Astrology and War" (11 June), Harrison noted that a Mass Observation study revealed that belief in astrology was much more prevalent in working-class Britain than intellectuals realized, and he expressed the concern that astrologers were biased toward optimistic prophecy because this attracted readers. "[I]n the long run," he felt, "it must be dangerous to the war effort that people should continually be lulled by complacency unrelated to reality" (5). The phrase quoted by TSE appears in Harrisson's conclusion, which suggests that the growing popularity of astrology must be "diagnosed and dealt with."

12. In "Astrology and Adult Education" (22 June 1942), Henry Morris posits adult education as the remedy for "the decadence of which Mr. Harrisson gives one dreadful instance" (5).

13. The English writers H. (Sir Henry) Rider Haggard (1856-1925) and Sir Anthony Hope (Hawkins) (1863-1933) were the authors of such best-selling adventure novels as Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *She* (1887), and Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894).

14. *Bull-Dog Drummond: The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull* (1920), by H. C. McNeile, was followed by five further novels in the 1920s and four in the 1930s featuring Captain Hugh "Bulldog" Drummond. After McNeile's death in 1937, the series was extended by Gerard Fairlie – who had been one of McNeile's models for Drummond – as late as 1954. In his Lecture Notes for English 26 at Harvard, TSE attributes the character to the influence of Kipling (4.762).

The Classics and the Man of Letters[1]

London: Oxford University Press, 1942

Not very long ago, an eminent author, in the course of expressing his views about the future of education after this war, went a little out of his way to declare that in the new order there would still be a place for Greek. He qualified this concession, however, by explaining that the study of Greek was a field of scholarship of equal dignity with Egyptology, and several other specialized studies which he named, and that the opportunity to pursue these studies should, in any liberal society, be provided for the few who were particularly drawn to them. I read this in one of the periodicals which are found in the waiting-rooms of certain experts in applied science; and having neglected to make a note of the passage before being summoned to my professional appointment, I cannot quote chapter and verse, and therefore withhold the name of the author. But this statement, made without irony and wholly in a spirit of enlightened generosity, started the train of thought which I propose to continue here. I am grateful to the writer for having suggested to my mind the only possible role in which I can present myself on this occasion. In my earlier years I obtained, partly by subtlety, partly by effrontery, and partly by accident, a reputation amongst the credulous for learning and scholarship, of which (having no further use for it) I have since tried to disembarrass myself. Better to confess one's weaknesses, when they are certain to be revealed sooner or later, than to leave them to be exposed by posterity: though it is, I have discovered, easier in our times to acquire an undeserved reputation for learning than to get rid of it: but that is neither here nor there. My point is that if I made those claims for the classics which can only be supported by the erudition of the scholar, or those which can only be pleaded by what we now call the education*ist*, I might jeopardize the cause: for there are far better scholars than I, who attach less importance to the study of Latin and Greek than I do, and there are teachers who can demonstrate the impracticability of the studies which I should like to promote. But if I present the defence of the classics merely from the point of view of the man of letters, I am on safer ground: and I think you will agree that the claim to be a man of letters is, after all, a modest pretension. I must, however, begin by explaining why I have used this rather indefinite term, and what I mean by it.

If I were more specific, and spoke of "the poet," "the novelist," "the dramatist," or "the critic," I should suggest to your minds a number of particular considerations which would distract your attention from the view of literature as a whole which I wish to keep before us in the present context. Take, for instance, the term "poet" and the objections which it would immediately evoke. We are commonly inclined to assume that the creation of literature, and poetry especially, depends simply upon the unpredictable appearance from time to time of writers of genius; that genius cannot be brought into the world at will, that when it does appear it is likely to break every rule, that no system of education can foster it, and no system of education can stifle it. If we look at literature as merely a succession of great writers, instead of looking at the literature of one European language as something which forms a significant whole in itself, and a significant part in the literature of Europe, this is the view we are likely to take. Taking this view, we look at each great writer by himself; and looking at him by himself, we are unlikely to believe that he would have been a greater writer, or an inferior writer, if he had had a different kind of education. The defects of a great writer's background are inextricably confused with its advantages; just as the shortcomings of his character are indissolubly associated with his shining virtues, and his material difficulties with his success. Can we regret, for instance, that François Villon did not choose to mix with more respectable society, or that Robert Burns did not have the same schooling as Dr. Johnson? The life of a man of genius, viewed in relation to his writing, comes to take a pattern of inevitability, and even his disabilities will seem to have stood him in good stead.

This way of looking at a great poet or novelist or dramatist, is half of the truth: it is what we find when we look at one writer after another, without balancing this point of view by the imaginative grasp of a national literature as a whole. I wanted to make it clear that I do not pretend that a classical education is essential for the writer of genius: and unless I can suggest to your minds that a great literature is more than the sum of a number of great writers, that it has a character of its own, much of my contention will be misunderstood. It is because I do not want to concentrate your attention upon the man of genius that I have used the term "man of letters." This includes men of the second or third, or lower ranks as well as the greatest; and these secondary writers provide collectively, and individually in varying degrees, an important part of the environment of the great writer, as well as his first audience, his first appreciators, his first critical correctors

– and perhaps his first detractors. The continuity of a literature is essential to its greatness; it is very largely the function of secondary writers to preserve this continuity, and to provide a body of writing which is not necessarily read by posterity, but which plays a great part in forming the link between those writers who continue to be read. This continuity is largely unconscious, and only visible in historical retrospect: I need only refer you for evidence to the monumental, though brief, essay by Professor R. W. Chambers on *The Continuity of English Prose*.[2] And it is within this continuity, and within this environment, that, for my present purpose, individual authors have to be considered. When we look at them in this way, we can see that, among the great, even some of the most formal and correct have been also innovators and even rebels, and that even some of the most revolutionary have carried on the work of those from whose influence they rebelled.

It would be easy, indeed, to muster an army of great names, of men who have become great writers with very little educational advantage. Bunyan and Abraham Lincoln are only two among the names more frequently cited. These men, and others, learned how to use the English language very largely from the English Bible: and it is the tritest commonplace that a knowledge of the Bible, Shakespeare and Bunyan (I might add the Book of Common Prayer) could teach a man of genius, or a man of first-rate ability short of genius, all that he needs in order to write English well. But I would remark first, that it is by no means irrelevant that the translators of that English Bible were great scholars in their time as well as great stylists; and we have to ask, not merely what had Shakespeare and Bunyan read, but what had the English authors read whose works nourished Shakespeare and Bunyan? And I would remark next, that the education given to Shakespeare, or Bunyan, or Lincoln, would be about the most difficult kind to get to-day. It would be much more reasonable to expect to find a poet with the learning of a Ben Jonson or a Milton than either a poet or prose writer who had had the advantages of Shakespeare or Bunyan. No schoolmaster could afford the reputation of sending his pupils forth as ill-furnished as these men were. And there is too much to read, for anybody to be expected to master, and to believe in, a few authors [*sic*]; apart from the fact that out of school there is every pressure to write badly, to talk incoherently, and to think confusedly.

It should be apparent at this point, that our primary concern in considering the education of the man of letters, is not the amount of learning which a man acquires, the number of years during which he is subjected to the educational process, or the degree of scholastic distinction which he attains: what is of prime importance is the type of education within which his schooling falls. The most instructive contrast of degree of education within the same type is that provided by Shakespeare and Milton, our two greatest poets. We can say of Shakespeare, that never has a man turned so little knowledge to such great account; we must couple Milton with Dante, in saying that never has a poet possessed of such great learning so completely justified the acquisition of it. Shakespeare's education, what he had of it, belongs in the same tradition as that of Milton: it was essentially a classical education. The significance of a type of education may lie almost as much in what it omits as in what it includes. Shakespeare's classical knowledge appears to have been derived largely from translations. But he lived in a world in which the wisdom of the ancients was respected, and their poetry admired and enjoyed; he was less well educated than many of his colleagues, but his was education of the same kind – and it is almost more important, for a man of letters, that his associates should be well educated than that he should be well educated himself. The standards and the values were there; and Shakespeare himself had that ability, which is not native to everyone, to extract the utmost possible from translations. In these two advantages he had what mattered most.

If Shakespeare's knowledge was fragmentary and second-hand, that of Milton was comprehensive and direct. A lesser poet, with the learning and the tastes of Milton, would have been in danger of becoming a mere pedant in verse. An understanding of Milton's poetry requires some acquaintance with several subjects none of which is very much in favour to-day: a knowledge of the Bible, not necessarily in Hebrew and Greek, but certainly in English; a knowledge of classical literature, mythology, and history, of Latin syntax and versification and of Christian theology. Some knowledge of Latin is necessary, not only for understanding what Milton is talking about, but much more for understanding his style and his music. It is not that Milton's vocabulary is excessively weighted with Latin words: there was more of that in the previous century. An acquaintance with Latin is necessary if we are to understand, and to accept, the involutions of his sentence structure, and if we are to hear the complete music of his verse. The present generation may miss, what we cannot expect from Milton, the colloquial style, the sound of the conversational voice, the range of mood and emotion which requires a more homely diction for its expression; it may sometimes find his syntax tortured. Milton has been reproached, and there is some truth behind the reproach, for writing English like a dead language: I think it was Landor who said so, and Landor is a critic to be treated with respect.[3] Milton's was certainly a style fatal to imitators: that is just as true of the style of James Joyce, and the influence of a great writer upon other writers can neither add to nor detract from his title to honour. The point is that Milton's Latinism is essential to his greatness, and that I have only chosen him as the extreme example of English poetry in general. You may write English poetry without knowing any Latin; I am not so sure whether without Latin you can wholly understand it. I believe, and have said elsewhere, that the rich possibilities of English verse – possibilities still unexhausted – owe much to the variety of racial strains bringing in a variety of speech and verse rhythms; and that English verse also owes much to the fact that Greek for three hundred years, and Latin for longer than that, have gone to its formation.[4] And what I have said of verse can be applied to prose also, though perhaps with less compulsion: can we really enter into the style of Clarendon unless we have at least a smattering of Tacitus, or the style of Gibbon unless we have some awareness of the immense power upon him of the classical and post-classical chroniclers, the patristic and post-patristic theologians, who provided him with his material?

If a classical education is the background for English literature in the past, we are justified in affirming not merely that a good knowledge of Latin (if not of Greek) should be expected of those who teach English literature, but that some knowledge of Latin should be expected of those who study it. This is not quite the direction, however, which I propose to pursue. I am not here concerned with the teaching of literature, but with teaching only in relation to those who are going to write it. For many generations the classics provided the basis of the education of the people from whom the majority of our men of letters have sprung: which is far from saying that the majority of our men of letters have been recruited from any limited social class. This common basis of education has, I believe, had a great part in giving English letters of the past that unity which gives us the right to say that we have not only produced a succession of great writers, but a literature, and a literature which is a distinguished part of a recognizable entity called European Literature. We are then justified in inquiring what is likely to happen, to our language and our literature, when the connection between the classics and our own literature is completely broken, when the classical scholar is as completely specialized as the Egyptologist, and when the poet or the critic whose mind and taste have been exercised on Latin and Greek literature will be more exceptional than the dramatist who has prepared himself for his task in the theatre by a close study of optical, electrical and acoustical physics? You have the option of welcoming the change as the dawn of emancipation, or of deploring it as the twilight of literature; but at least you must agree that we might expect it to mark some great difference between the literature of the past and that of the future – perhaps so great as to be the transition from an old language to a new one.

In the past twenty years I have observed what seems to me a deterioration in the middle literary stratum, and notably in the standards and the scholarship which are wanted for literary criticism. Lest you judge too hastily that this complaint is merely the creak of rheumatic middle age, I will quote a representative of a younger literary generation than my own, Mr. Michael Roberts:

> By the summer of 1939 there were only two serious literary papers in England: an admirable quarterly called *Scrutiny*, with a small circulation, and *The Times Literary Supplement*, which, like the more serious libraries, had fewer readers in 1938 than in 1922. The notion of quality became submerged in the idea that "it's all a matter of taste," and the untutored taste of the individual was tempered only by the fear of being excessively eccentric or excessively conventional. One ingenious publisher succeeded in making the best of both worlds, by advertising "*A Novel for a Few People*. 20th Thousand."[5]

The reasons for such a decline are no doubt complex, and I am not going to suggest that this is all due to the neglect of classical studies, or that a revival of these studies would be enough to stem the current. But the disappearance of any common background of instruction, any common body of literary and historical knowledge, any common acquaintance with the foundations of English literature, has probably made it easier for writers to comply with the pressure of tendencies for which they were not responsible. One function of criticism – I am not thinking of the great critics or the classics of criticism, but rather of the hebdomadary reviewer,[6] formerly anonymous, who has now more often the publicity of signature, though seldom the satisfaction of higher pay – one function of criticism is to act as a kind of cog regulating the rate of change of literary taste. When the cog sticks, and reviewers remain fast in the taste of a previous generation, the machine needs to be ruthlessly dismantled and reassembled; when it slips, and the reviewer accepts novelty as a sufficient criterion of excellence, the machine needs to be stopped and tightened up. The effect of either fault in the machine is to cause a division between those who see no good in anything that is new, and those who see no good in anything else: the antiquation of the old, and the eccentricity and even charlatanism of the new, are both thereby accelerated. The effect of this failure of criticism is to place the serious writer in a dilemma: either to write for too large a public or to write for too small a public. And the curious result of either choice, is to place a premium on the ephemeral. The novelty of a work of imagination which is only popular, and has nothing really new in it, soon wears off: for a later generation will prefer the original to the copy, when both belong to the past. And the novelty of anything that is merely new produces only a momentary shock: the same work will not produce the same shock twice, but must be followed by something newer.

The charge has been brought against the more original literature of our time, that it has been written for a small and exclusive audience – an audience not small and exclusive because it was the best, but because (so it has been alleged) it consisted of perverse, eccentric, or anti-social people with their snobbish parasites. This appears to be an accusation which the most dissimilar groups can concur in bringing: the conservative who regard anything new as anarchic, and the radical who regard anything they do not understand as undemocratic. With the political passions enlisted for the support of these judgements I am not here concerned. My point is that this is a consequence, not of individual aberrancy – though it creates a situation in which the sham can easily pass, for a time and with some readers, as genuine – but of social disintegration: in the literary aspect, of critical decay. It arises from the lack of continuous communication, of the artist with his friends and fellow artists and the small number of keen amateurs of the arts, with a larger public educated in the same way, of taste cultivated upon the literature of the past but ready to accept what is good in the present when that is brought to their notice, and so with the world at large. If an author's first discriminating readers are themselves isolated from the larger world, their influence upon him may be unbalanced: their taste is in danger of yielding to their group prejudice and fancy, and they may easily succumb to the temptation of overvaluing the achievement of their members and favourite authors.

It is one thing to pass these strictures upon the present condition of literature, or to voice forebodings of its diminished future, and quite another to put forward positive suggestions about the type of education most profitable for the man of letters, and the way in which it could be fitted in to the general educational scheme. In concern with education we are attentive to the problems of the child and the adolescent; very largely to the average or the mediocre child; very largely to the child whose educational opportunities have heretofore been meagre. When we think of the larger pattern we are apt to think (quite rightly) in terms of the production of good citizens. The question I leave with you is the question whether we think the maintenance of the greatness of our literature a matter of sufficient importance to be taken account of, in our educational planning, at all? and even if we agree about its importance, whether education can take any responsibility for it? The answer may be, No. But the question must be asked, and the answer must not be a hasty answer. The right answer can only come after some very hard thinking, and thinking with very wide scope, by many people. I would not dissimulate the difficulty. The problem of training an adequate supply of good scientists, in various departments, is one very much with us; it is, I imagine, one much more readily capable of solution than is my problem. But I do not think that it would seem so much more soluble, were it not that we all recognize, under the pressure of material evidence, its necessity; and I think that agreement on the importance of a problem makes the solution of it much more likely.

I can see that the proper training of a man with the scientific bent, even now when the ramifications of the sciences are so extensive and the knowledge to be assimilated in any branch of science so vast, is more readily susceptible of precise determination. So, for that matter, is the training for any other art than that of letters. The painter, the sculptor, the architect, the musician, though they may have more difficulty in scraping a living, or in combining the pursuit of their art with an unrelated stipendiary job, all have a much more definite technique to master than that of the writer. Their essential training is more technical; the subjects which they must learn are more clearly indicated; and they do not need that varied general culture without which the man of letters is ill-equipped. Another difference, not unconnected with the foregoing, is that literary ability does not, with any certainty, manifest itself so early, or with such precise confidence of its goal, as does a bent towards another art. A desire to express oneself in verse is (or so my experience inclines me to believe) a trait of the majority of Anglo-Saxons of both sexes at some stage of their development: it may even persist long after the lack of vocation is patent to everyone except the authors themselves. When a schoolboy composes good verses, we are justified in expecting that he will, in later life, excel in some pursuit or other – but that pursuit may take him very far from poetry or letters – it may lead toward the bar or the episcopal bench.[7] The truly literary mind is likely to develop slowly; it needs a more comprehensive and more varied diet, a more miscellaneous knowledge of facts, a greater experience of men and of ideas, than the mind required for the practice of the other arts. It therefore presents a more baffling educational problem. In saying this, I am not arrogating any pre-eminence for the art of letters itself: I am merely pointing out a difference in the preparation.

I should like to make clear at this point that there are several arguments in favour of the classical education with which, however cogent and sufficient, I am not here concerned. Into the question whether all children, whatever their destination, should be taught elementary Latin, and perhaps Greek – the question whether it is desirable, and then whether it is practicable – I shall not venture.[8] I would only remark that the question of the age up to which all children should have the same education, and the question of the common element in all education up to a later stage, is a very important one even from the point of view of the man of letters: for upon this depends the possibility of a general audience, the possibility both of the author's being able to communicate with people in all walks of life, and of their being able to understand each other. I would also observe in passing, that to postpone the introduction to Latin to the age at which a boy appears to be more gifted for languages than for other studies is to postpone it too long – apart from my belief that it would be most desirable for everyone to possess some knowledge of Latin even if none of Greek. I am not here interested, however, in the advocacy of the study of these two languages as "mental discipline." I think that the defence of any study purely as "discipline" in the modern sense can be maintained too obstinately: I have, for instance, heard compulsory chapel defended, by an unbeliever, on the ground that it was good for boys to have a duty which they disliked so much. The defence of "discipline" in the abstract, the belief that any "mental discipline" carried out in the right way and far enough will produce an abstract "educated man," seems to have some relation to the egalitarian tendencies of the nineteenth century which extended to subjects of study the same ideal of equality held for the human beings who might study them. A *disciple*, at any rate, is surely a willing pupil, and one who attaches himself to a master voluntarily, because he believes in the value of the subject which the master professes and believes that that master is qualified to give him the initiation he wants. Discipleship, that is, starts by a valuation – by the desire to attain to some particular knowledge or proficiency, not by the desire for training in the abstract followed by the judgement that this subject of study will provide it. For my purpose it is the value of the subject that is in question, not the incidental and necessary "discipline" by which its command is attained. And as I am not considering discipline in the abstract, so I am not considering "education" in the abstract, or the somewhat barren question of the definition of the abstract "educated man."

For my purposes, also, the distinction between "vocational" and "cultural" education is of little use: apart from the disadvantage that "vocational" is apt to connote merely a salary and a pension, and "cultural" to connote an "education for leisure" which is either a refined hedonism or a skill to practise harmless hobbies. The writer, *qua* writer, seldom draws a salary, and he has no problem of occupying a supposed leisure. Everything may be grist to his mill, and the more knowledge of every kind that he can assimilate the better: the serious distinction, for him, is between the subjects which he should be taught, and the subjects which he should acquire by himself. His business is communication through language; when he is an imaginative writer, he is engaged in the most difficult form of communication, where precision is of the utmost importance, a precision which cannot be given beforehand but has to be found in every new phrase. In order to understand language in the way in which the man of letters should understand it, we must know the various purposes for which language has been used; and that involves some knowledge of the subjects for the communication of which men have used language in the past: notably of history, for you cannot understand the literature of the past without some knowledge of the conditions under which it was written, and the sort of people who wrote it; of logic, for that is an investigation of the anatomy of thought in language; of philosophy, for that is the attempt to use language in the most abstract way possible.

Into this already formidable programme we have to introduce at some stage at least one modern foreign language as well as our own language and the classics. It should be a major language with a parallel development to our own, and with a flourishing contemporary literature; for we are greatly helped to develop objectivity of taste if we can appreciate the work of foreign authors, living in the same world as ourselves, and expressing their vision of it in another great language. The possession of several foreign languages is of course better than of one alone; but it is impossible to understand the language, the literature and the people of more than one foreign country equally well. In our time, the most important foreign language, for the man of letters, has been French: and I need not remind you that for French a knowledge of Latin is still more important, and a knowledge of Greek hardly less important, than for English. For a man of very exceptional linguistic ability, who was not already sunk beneath the burden of the acquirements I recommend, I believe that an acquaintance with some great and more remote language might be a very valuable addition; Hebrew suggests itself, but both for extreme difference of structure and intellectual dignity a very good choice would be Chinese: but to mention this is to scan the very horizon of possibility.

All these branches of learning have to be acquired through teachers; and there does not appear to be much space left in the curriculum for scientific subjects. I am assuming however that my excellent man of letters will have had (what I did not attain) enough training at school in the language of mathematics not to be completely baffled when he attempts, by himself, to understand the general significance of some scientific discovery. The only reason of universal applicability, why he could not acquire more detailed scientific knowledge in his formal education, is the very obvious one that there was not time: for I have allowed for some hours to be spent in eating, sleeping, social ritual, conviviality, worship, athletic activities and physical training. It is most desirable that he should be able, throughout his life, to take an interest in subjects in which he has not been trained; for, as I have suggested, to a person of some power of imagination almost anything can be of use. It is sometimes suggested that the wonders of science provide nourishment for the imagination. I am sure they can: but I think a distinction should be drawn between the imagination of a great scientist, arriving at a discovery on the basis of observed phenomena the significance of which had escaped other equally well trained and informed scientists, and the imagination of a Lucretius, or even a Shelley, informing their scientific knowledge with an emotional life with which the scientist, as such, has no concern.

I have not, as you see, been urging the claims of "cultural," or general, education against specialized; for, in its way, the education of the man of letters must be itself specialized and "vocational." But we have to face one more difficulty. I have made clear that I am not attempting to legislate for the man of genius, but for the environment of men of letters into which he will be born or find his way. But on the other hand you cannot draw a sharp line between the man of letters and his audience, between the critic in print and the critic in conversation. Nobody suffers more from being limited to the society of his own profession than does the writer: it is still worse when his audience is composed chiefly of other writers or would-be writers. He needs a small public of substantially the same education as himself, as well as the same tastes; a larger public with some common background with him; and finally he should have something in common with everyone who has intelligence and sensibility and can read his language. The problem of the survival of English literature, therefore, brings us to the problem of the need for unity in education, the need for some unification which will not be to the detriment of any of the branches of learning and investigation, scientific or humanistic. This problem, so much greater than any problem of administration, organization, or curricular devices, because it is a spiritual problem, because its solution involves not merely planning, but *growing* a pattern of values, is so vast a problem that it is not one for the educational specialist alone, but for all who are concerned with the structure of society. It is one with which I have no more to do here than to show my awareness of it. My only contribution is to proclaim that the future of English Literature will be deeply affected by the way in which we solve, or fail to solve this problem.

My particular thesis has been that the maintenance of classical education is essential to the maintenance of the continuity of English Literature. How, and by what adaptation to the necessary, the desirable and the inevitable, the place for the classics in education is to be found is not a subject on which I have the right to claim your attention. But I am sure that this is one important line of defence of the classics. The standards of the highest scholarship have to be kept up, and the work of research honoured: it is necessary that the prestige of the great scholar should not be allowed to dwindle. That there will continue to be a place for the great scholar – without whom the whole fabric of classical education crumbles – I do not doubt: what is less certain is that in the future he will be discovered young enough to be given the proper training; and that he will be allowed any greater role than that of preparing a few younger men to carry on his work, without prospect of wider influence. The second group is that of non-professional scholarship and of scholarship in other fields in which an accurate knowledge of the classical languages is, or should be required; it includes not only the theologians and the historians, but the clergy and ministry, the teachers of modern language and literature, and the literary critics. For the last of these, certainly, it should hardly be enough that he should have spent some years at school in acquiring the languages, if he never afterwards opens a text: he must have the literature accessible and operative in his taste and judgement; he must be able to enjoy it. But the maintenance of these types of scholarship is not enough or even possible unless some knowledge of the civilizations of Greece and Rome, some respect for their achievements, some understanding of their historical relation to our own, and some acquaintance with their literature and their wisdom *in translation* can be cultivated among a very much larger number of people: among those who (like myself) have not remembered enough to read the originals with ease, and among those who have never studied the languages at all. A limited preserve of scholarship will be ineffectual unless a much wider respect for, and appreciation of the relevance of, the subject-matter of this scholarship can be disseminated amongst those who will never be given the first-hand knowledge.

My assertions about the dependence of English Literature upon the Latin and Greek literatures, will, I am aware, have no persuasive influence whatever upon several classes of people. There are those who do not believe that literature is a matter of any great importance, and those who, while conceding a certain value to the literature of the past, do not consider it of great importance that English Literature should continue to take a front rank. There are those who acknowledge the importance of literature, but do not believe that one type of education or another will make much difference to its further survival. There are those who, immersed perhaps in the immense difficulties of providing some sort of education or other to the whole of the nation, consider this extra problem less urgent, or complain that they have so many other things to think of that it is more than can be coped with. And finally, there are those who want so new a world that they even welcome the prospect of a breach of continuity. And in many minds, no doubt, all of these attitudes can co-exist in a half-formed state; now one, now another, presenting itself in consciousness.

To attempt to confute all these objections would be an impertinence in the present company, and some of them come much more within the province of those who have had life-long experience of the classroom and the council chamber. My appeal can only address itself to those who already accept the contention that the preservation of a living literature is more than a matter of interest only to amateurs of verse and readers of novels; and who see in it the preservation of developed speech, and of civilization against barbarism. They will be those also who appreciate the need, if the present chaos is ever to be reduced to order, of something more than an administrative or an economic unification – the need of a cultural unification in diversity of Europe, and who believe that a new unity can only grow on the old roots: the Christian Faith, and the classical languages which Europeans inherit in common. These roots are, I think, inextricably intertwined. I should not care to risk the heresy, upon which some religious-political writers have appeared to verge, of regarding Christianity as a European, rather than a universal Faith: I do not wish to be accused of inventing a new heresy to the effect that salvation depends upon getting a first in classics. But the culture of Europe, such as it is, is a Christian culture; and conversely, the traditional religious faith of Europe, including Britain, cannot preserve its intellectual vigour unless a high standard of Latin and Greek scholarship is maintained amongst its teachers. But these considerations are beyond the mandate which I have assumed for this occasion. And I do not wish to leave you with the impression that I am asking too much of formal education, either in the sphere of religion or in that of literature: I am quite aware that an educational system cannot of itself bring about either great faith or great literature: it is truer to say that our education is not so much the generator of our culture as the offspring of it. But those who care for the preservation, the extension and the advancement of our culture cannot fail to interest themselves, however unqualified they may be to pass judgement, in our classical heritage.

NOTES

1. On 28 Mar 1941, Sir Richard Livingstone asked TSE to stand as his successor for the presidency of the Classical Association. TSE demurred on 30 Mar: "I should suppose that the minimal requirement of a President of the Classical Association must be that he should be a classical scholar. . . . It would require a whole evening to enlighten and convince you of the superficiality of my knowledge, and the profundity of my ignorance." However, as TSE explained on 27 Apr to John Hayward – five days after his election to the presidency – Livingstone "replied that it was the custom to choose presidents alternately from the qualified and the unqualified. All I have to do is to make a speech in 1942 on resigning office." He delivered his presidential address – the present text – on 15 Apr 1942.

2. *On the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School* (London: Oxford UP, 1932). Raymond Wilson Chambers (1874-1942), English literary scholar, was Quain Professor of English at University College, London, from 1922 to 1941.

3. Landor appears not to have made such a remark about Milton, and in his third series of *Imaginary Conversations* (1828), he has Milton tell Marvel nearly the opposite: "Fond as I am of Latin, and many as are the verses I have written in it, never was I so rash and inconsiderate as to force its metres into our own language, which is infinitely more capable of stops and variations." In his introduction to *The English Poems of John Milton* (1940), which TSE – as he told C. S. Lewis in a letter dated 8 Mar 1943 – considered "one of the finest pieces of criticism in English," Charles Williams ascribes to Landor the statement that Milton "wrote English like a learned language"; however, this attribution appears dubious as well. TSE had committed himself in 1936 to the criticism that Milton "writes English like a dead language" (5.373-74), and the phrase is now widely attributed to him and not to Landor.

4. TSE extends this argument in both "Poetry, Speech and Music" (6.274-75) and "The Music of Poetry" (6.311-13).

5. *The Recovery of the West* (London: Faber & Faber, 1941), 43. TSE quotes from a section headed "The Decline of Culture," in which Roberts asserts the deterioration not only of "the middle literary stratum" but of all levels of culture. He associates this decline with an intensifying "contempt for authority" and a "general subversiveness" of cultural institutions.

"20th Thousand" was a standard locution in publishers' advertisements, indicating that a book was in sufficient demand to have required additional printings totaling 20,000 copies. Since initial print runs of Victorian novels typically numbered in the low thousands at most, with follow-on printings of 1,000 being quite typical, depending on initial sales, the printing of the twentieth thousand represented a notable (though not a rare) degree of success. The twentieth thousand was of course much less a mark of distinction by 1941 than it had been decades earlier, though the familiarity of the expression extended its life span.

6. I.e., a reviewer for a weekly magazine or newspaper.

7. "toward . . . the episcopal bench": i.e., toward a career as an Anglican bishop.

8. In "The Classics in France – and in England" (1923), TSE discusses the restoration of Latin and Greek to the standard curriculum in France and argues for a parallel change in Britain (2.469).

The Music of Poetry[1*]

The poet, when he talks or writes about poetry, has peculiar qualifications and peculiar limitations: if we allow for the latter we can better appreciate the former – a caution which I recommend to poets themselves as well as to the readers of what they say about poetry. I can never re-read any of my own prose writings without acute embarrassment: I shirk the task, and consequently may not take account of all the assertions to which I have at one time or another committed myself; I may often repeat what I have said before, and I may often contradict myself. But I believe that the critical writings of poets, of which in the past there have been some very distinguished examples, owe a great deal of their interest to the fact that the poet, at the back of his mind, if not as his ostensible purpose, is always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wants to write. Especially when he is young, and actively engaged in battling for the kind of poetry which he practises, he sees the poetry of the past in relation to his own: and his gratitude to those dead poets from whom he has learned, as well as his indifference to those whose aims have been alien to his own, may be exaggerated. He is not so much a judge as an advocate. His knowledge even is likely to be partial: for his studies will have led him to concentrate on certain authors to the neglect of others. When he theorizes about poetic creation, he is likely to be generalizing one type of experience; when he ventures into aesthetics, he is likely to be less, rather than more competent than the philosopher; and he may do best merely to report, for the information of the philosopher, the data of his own introspection. What he writes about poetry, in short, must be assessed in relation to the poetry he writes. We must return to the scholar for ascertainment of facts, and to the more detached critic for impartial judgment. The critic, certainly, should be something of a scholar, and the scholar something of a critic. Ker, whose attention was devoted mainly to the literature of the past, and to problems of historical relationship, must be put in the category of scholars; but he had in a high degree the sense of value, the good taste,[2†] the understanding of critical canons and the ability to apply them, without which the scholar's contribution can be only indirect.

There is another, more particular respect in which the scholar's and the practitioner's acquaintance with versification differ. Here, perhaps, I should be prudent to speak only of myself. I have never been able to retain the names of feet and metres, or to pay the proper respect to the accepted rules of scansion. At school, I enjoyed very much reciting Homer or Virgil – in my own fashion. Perhaps I had some instinctive suspicion that nobody really knew how Greek ought to be pronounced, or what interweaving of Greek and native rhythms the Roman ear might appreciate in Virgil; perhaps I had only an instinct of protective laziness. But certainly, when it came to applying rules of scansion to English verse, with its very different stresses and variable syllabic values, I wanted to know why one line was good and another bad; and this, scansion could not tell me. The only way to learn to manipulate any kind of English verse seemed to be by assimilation and imitation, by becoming so engrossed in the work of a particular poet that one could produce a recognizable derivative. This is not to say that I consider the analytical study of metric, of the abstract forms which sound so extraordinarily different when handled by different poets, to be an utter waste of time. It is only that a study of anatomy will not teach you how to make a hen lay eggs. I do not recommend any other way of beginning the study of Greek and Latin verse than with the aid of those rules of scansion which were established by grammarians after most of the poetry had been written; but if we could revive those languages sufficiently to be able to speak and hear them as the authors did, we could regard the rules with indifference. We have to learn a dead language by an artificial method, and we have to approach its versification by an artificial method, and our methods of teaching have to be applied to pupils most of whom have only a moderate gift for language. Even in approaching the poetry of our own language, we may find the classification of metres, of lines with different numbers of syllables and stresses in different places, useful at a preliminary stage, as a simplified map of a complicated territory: but it is only the study, not of poetry but of poems, that can train our ear. It is not from rules, or by cold-blooded imitation of style that we learn to write: we learn by imitation indeed, but by a deeper imitation than is achieved by analysis of style. When we imitated Shelley, it was not so much from a desire to write as he did, as from an invasion of the adolescent self by Shelley, which made Shelley's way, for the time, the only way in which to write.

The practice of English versification has, no doubt, been affected by awareness of the rules of prosody: it is a matter for the historical scholar to determine the influence of Latin upon the innovators[3†] Wyatt and Surrey. The great grammarian Otto Jespersen has maintained that the structure of English grammar has been misunderstood in our attempts to make it conform to the categories of Latin – as in the supposed "subjunctive."[4] In the history of versification, the question whether poets have misunderstood the rhythms of the language in imitating foreign models does not arise: we must accept the practices of great poets of the past, because they are practices upon which our ear has been trained and must be trained. I believe that a number of foreign influences have gone to enrich the range and variety of English verse. Some classical scholars hold the view – this is a matter beyond my competence – that the native measure of Latin poetry was accentual rather than syllabic, that it was overlaid by the influence of a very different language – Greek – and that it reverted to something approximating to its early form, in poems such as the *Pervigilium Veneris* and the early Christian hymns.[5] If so, I cannot help suspecting that to the cultivated audience of the age of Virgil, part of the pleasure in the poetry arose from the presence in it of two metrical schemes in a kind of counterpoint: even though the audience may not necessarily have been able to analyse the experience. Similarly, it may be possible that the beauty of some English poetry is due to the presence of more than one metrical structure in it. Deliberate attempts to devise English metres on Latin models are usually very frigid. Among the most successful are a few exercises by Campion, in his brief but too little read treatise on metrics; among the most eminent failures, in my opinion, are the experiments of Robert Bridges – I would give all his ingenious inventions for his earlier and more traditional lyrics.[6] But when a poet has so thoroughly absorbed Latin poetry that its movement informs his verse without deliberate artifice – as with Milton and in some of Tennyson's poems – the result can be among the great triumphs of English versification.

What I think we have, in English poetry, is a kind of amalgam of systems of divers sources (though I do not like to use the word "system," for it has a suggestion of conscious invention rather than growth): an amalgam like the amalgam of races, and indeed partly due to racial origins. The rhythms of Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Norman French, of Middle English and Scots, have all made their mark upon English poetry, together with the rhythms of Latin, and, at various periods, of French, Italian and Spanish. As with human beings in a composite race, different strains may be dominant in different individuals, even in members of the same family, so one or another element in the poetic compound may be more congenial to one or another poet or to one or another period. The kind of poetry we get is determined, from time to time, by the influence of one or another contemporary literature in a foreign language; or by circumstances which make one period of our own past more sympathetic than another; or by the prevailing emphasis in education. But there is one law of nature more powerful than any of these varying currents, or influences from abroad or from the past: the law that poetry must not stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear. Whether poetry is accentual or syllabic, rhymed or rhymeless, formal or free, it cannot afford to lose its contact with the changing language of common intercourse.

It may appear strange, that when I profess to be talking about the "music" of poetry, I put such emphasis upon conversation. But I would remind you, first, that the music of poetry is not something which exists apart from the meaning. Otherwise, we could have poetry of great musical beauty which made no sense, and I have never come across such poetry. The apparent exceptions only show a difference of degree: there are poems in which we are moved by the music and take the sense for granted, just as there are poems in which we attend to the sense and are moved by the music without noticing it. Take an apparently extreme example – the nonsense verse of Edward Lear. His non-sense is not vacuity of sense: it is a parody of sense, and that is the sense of it. "The Jumblies" is a poem of adventure, and of nostalgia for the romance of foreign voyage and exploration; "The Yongy-Bongy Bo" and "The Dong with a Luminous Nose" are poems of unrequited passion – "blues" in fact.[7] We enjoy the music, which is of a high order, and we enjoy the feeling of irresponsibility towards the sense. Or take a poem of another type, the "Blue Closet" of William Morris. It is a delightful poem, though I cannot explain what it means and I doubt whether the author could have explained it.[8] It has an effect somewhat like that of a rune or charm, but runes and charms are very practical formulae designed to produce definite results, such as getting a cow out of a bog. But its obvious intention (and I think the author succeeds) is to produce the effect of a dream. It is not necessary, in order to enjoy the poem, to know what the dream means; but human beings have an unshakeable belief that dreams mean something: they used to believe – and many still believe – that dreams disclose the secrets of the future; the orthodox modern faith is that they reveal the secrets – or at least the more horrid secrets – of the past. It is a commonplace to observe that the meaning of a poem may wholly escape paraphrase. It is not quite so commonplace to observe that the meaning of a poem may be something larger than its author's conscious purpose, and something remote from its origins. One of the more obscure of modern poets was the French writer Stéphane Mallarmé, of whom the French sometimes say that his language is so peculiar that it can be understood only by foreigners. The late Roger Fry, and his friend Charles Mauron, published an English translation with notes to unriddle the meanings: when I learn that a difficult sonnet was inspired by seeing a painting on the ceiling reflected on the polished top of a table, or by seeing the light reflected from the foam on a glass of beer, I can only say that this may be a correct embryology, but it is not the meaning.[9] If we are moved by a poem, it has meant something, perhaps something important, to us; if we are not moved, then it is, as poetry, meaningless. We can be deeply stirred by hearing the recitation of a poem in a language of which we understand no word; but if we are then told that the poem is gibberish and has no meaning, we shall consider that we have been deluded – this was no poem, it was merely an imitation of instrumental music. If, as we are aware, only a part of the meaning can be conveyed by paraphrase, that is because the poet is occupied with frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist. A poem may appear to mean very different things to different readers, and all of these meanings may be different from what the author thought he meant. For instance, the author may have been writing some peculiar personal experience, which he saw quite unrelated to anything outside; yet for the reader the poem may become the expression of a general situation, as well as of some private experience of his own. The reader's interpretation may differ from the author's and be equally valid – it may even be better. There may be much more in a poem than the author was aware of. The different interpretations may all be partial formulations of one thing; the ambiguities may be due to the fact that the poem means more, not less, than ordinary speech can communicate.

So, while poetry attempts to convey something beyond what can be conveyed in prose rhythms, it remains, all the same, one person talking to another; and this is just as true if you sing it, for singing is another way of talking. The immediacy of poetry to conversation is not a matter on which we can lay down exact laws. Every revolution in poetry is apt to be, and sometimes to announce itself to be a return to common speech. That is the revolution which Wordsworth announced in his prefaces, and he was right:[10] but the same revolution had been carried out a century before by Oldham, Waller, Denham and Dryden; and the same revolution was due again something over a century later. The followers of a revolution develop the new poetic idiom in one direction or another; they polish or perfect it; meanwhile the spoken language goes on changing, and the poetic idiom goes out of date. Perhaps we do not realize how natural the speech of Dryden must have sounded to the most sensitive of his contemporaries. No poetry, of course, is ever exactly the same speech that the poet talks and hears: but it has to be in such a relation to the speech of his time that the listener or reader can say "that is how I should talk if I could talk poetry." This is the reason why the best contemporary poetry can give us a feeling of excitement and a sense of fulfilment different from any sentiment aroused by even very much greater poetry of a past age.

The music of poetry, then, must be a music latent in the common speech of its time. And that means also that it must be latent in the common speech of the poet's *place*. It would not be to my present purpose to inveigh against the ubiquity of standardized, or "B.B.C." English. If we all came to talk alike there would no longer be any point in our not writing alike: but until that time comes – and I hope it may be long postponed – it is the poet's business to use the speech which he finds about him, that with which he is most familiar. I shall always remember the impression of W. B. Yeats reading poetry aloud. To hear him read his own works was to be made to recognize how much the Irish way of speech is needed to bring out the beauties of Irish poetry: to hear Yeats reading William Blake was an experience of a different kind, more astonishing than satisfying. Of course, we do not want the poet merely to reproduce exactly the conversational idiom of himself, his family, his friends and his particular district: but what he finds there is the material out of which he must make his poetry. He must, like the sculptor, be faithful to the material in which he works; it is out of sounds that he has heard that he must make his melody and harmony.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all poetry ought to be melodious, or that melody is more than one of the components of the music of words. Some poetry is meant to be sung; most poetry, in modern times, is meant to be spoken – and there are many other things to be spoken of besides the murmur of innumerable bees or the moan of doves in immemorial elms.[11] Dissonance, even cacophony, has its place: just as, in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole; and the passages of less intensity will be, in relation to the level on which the total poem operates, prosaic – so that, in the sense implied by that context, it may be said that no poet can write a poem of amplitude unless he is a master of the prosaic.[12*]

What matters, in short, is the whole poem: and if the whole poem need not be, and often should not be, wholly melodious, it follows that a poem is not made only out of "beautiful words." I doubt whether, from the point of view of *sound* alone, any word is more or less beautiful than another – within its own language, for the question whether some languages are not more beautiful than others is quite another question. The ugly words are the words not fitted for the company in which they find themselves; there are words which are ugly because of rawness or because of antiquation; there are words which are ugly because of foreignness or ill-breeding (e.g. *television*): but I do not believe that any word well-established in its own language is either beautiful or ugly. The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or less wealth of association. Not all words, obviously, are equally rich and well-connected: it is part of the business of the poet to dispose the richer among the poorer, at the right points, and we cannot afford to load a poem too heavily with the former – for it is only at certain moments that a word can be made to insinuate the whole history of a language and a civilization. This is an "allusiveness" which is not the fashion or eccentricity of a peculiar type of poetry; but an allusiveness which is in the nature of words, and which is equally the concern of every kind of poet. My purpose here is to insist that a "musical poem" is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of the secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and that these two patterns are indissoluble and one. And if you object that it is only the pure sound, apart from the sense, to which the adjective "musical" can be rightly applied, I can only reaffirm my previous assertion that the sound of a poem is as much an abstraction from the poem as is the sense.

The history of blank verse illustrates two interesting and related points: the dependence upon speech and the striking difference, in what is prosodically the same form, between dramatic blank verse and blank verse employed for epical, philosophical, meditative and idyllic purposes. The dependence of verse upon speech is much more direct in dramatic poetry than in any other. In most kinds of poetry, the necessity for its reminding us of contemporary speech is reduced by the latitude allowed for personal idiosyncrasy: a poem by Gerard Hopkins, for instance, may sound pretty remote from the way in which you and I express ourselves – or rather, from the way in which our fathers and grandfathers expressed themselves: but Hopkins does give the impression that his poetry has the necessary fidelity to his way of thinking and talking to himself. But in dramatic verse the poet is speaking in one character after another, through the medium of a company of actors trained by a producer, and of different actors and different producers at different times: his idiom must be comprehensive of all the voices, but present at a deeper level than is necessary when the poet speaks only for himself. Some of Shakespeare's later verse is very elaborate and peculiar: but it remains the language, not of one person, but of a world of persons. It is based upon the speech of three hundred years ago, yet when we hear it well rendered we can forget the distance of time – as is brought home to us most patently in one of those plays, of which *Hamlet* is the chief, which can be fittingly produced in modern dress. By the time of Otway dramatic blank verse has become artificial and at best reminiscent; and when we get to the verse plays by nineteenth-century poets, of which the greatest is probably *The Cenci*, it is difficult to preserve any illusion of reality.[13] Nearly all the greater poets of the last century tried their hands at verse plays. These plays, which few people read more than once, are treated with respect as fine poetry; and their insipidity is usually attributed to the fact that the authors, though great poets, were amateurs in the theatre. But even if the poets had had greater natural gifts for the theatre, or had toiled to acquire the craft, their plays would have been just as ineffective, unless their theatrical talent and experience had shown them the necessity for a different kind of versification. It is not primarily lack of plot, or lack of action and suspense, or imperfect realization of character, or lack of anything of what is called "theatre," that makes these plays so lifeless: it is primarily that their rhythm of speech is something that we cannot associate with any human being except a poetry reciter.

Even under the powerful manipulation of Dryden dramatic blank verse shows a grave deterioration. There are splendid passages in *All for Love*:[14] yet Dryden's characters talk more naturally at times in the heroic plays which he wrote in rhymed couplets, than they do in what would seem the more natural form of blank verse – though less naturally than do the characters of Corneille and Racine in French. The causes for the rise and decline of any form of art are always complex, and we can trace a number of contributory causes, while there seems to remain some deeper cause incapable of formulation: I should not care to advance any one reason why prose came to supersede verse in the theatre. But I feel sure that one reason why blank verse cannot be employed now in the drama is that so much non-dramatic poetry, and great non-dramatic poetry, has been written in it in the last three hundred years. Our minds are saturated in these non-dramatic works in what is formally the same kind of verse. If we can imagine, as a flight of fancy, Milton coming before Shakespeare, Shakespeare would have had to discover quite a different medium from that which he used and perfected. Milton handled blank verse in a way which no one has ever approached or ever will approach: and in so doing did more than anyone or anything else to make it impossible for the drama: though we may also believe that dramatic blank verse had exhausted its resources, and had no future in any event. Indeed, Milton almost made blank verse impossible for any purpose for a couple of generations. It was the precursors of Wordsworth – Thomson, Young, Cowper – who made the first efforts to rescue it from the degradation to which the eighteenth-century imitators of Milton had reduced it. There is much, and varied, fine blank verse in the nineteenth century: the nearest to colloquial speech is that of Browning – but, significantly, in his monologues rather than in his plays.

To make a generalization like this is not to imply any judgment of the relative stature of poets. It merely calls attention to the profound difference between dramatic and all other kinds of verse: a difference in the music, which is a difference in the relation to the current spoken language. It leads to my next point: which is that the task of the poet will differ, not only according to his personal constitution, but according to the period in which he finds himself. At some periods, the task is to explore the musical possibilities of an established convention of the relation of the idiom of verse to that of speech; at other periods, the task is to catch up with the changes in colloquial speech, which are fundamentally changes in thought and sensibility. This cyclical movement also has a very great influence upon our critical judgment. At a time like ours, when a refreshment of poetic diction similar to that brought about by Wordsworth had been called for (whether it has been satisfactorily accomplished or not) we are inclined, in our judgments upon the past, to exaggerate the importance of the innovators at the expense of the reputation of the developers.[15†]

I have said enough, I think, to make clear that I do not believe that the task of the poet is primarily and always to effect a revolution in language. It would not be desirable, even if it were possible, to live in a state of perpetual revolution: the craving for continual novelty of diction and metric is as unwholesome as an obstinate adherence to the idiom of our grandfathers. There are times for exploration and times for the development of the territory acquired. The poet who did most for the English language is Shakespeare: and he carried out, in one short lifetime, the task of two poets. I can only say here, briefly,[16†] that the development of Shakespeare's verse can be roughly divided into two periods. During the first, he was slowly adapting his form to colloquial speech: so that by the time he wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* he had devised a medium in which everything that any dramatic character might have to say, whether high or low, "poetical" or "prosaic," could be said with naturalness and beauty. Having got to this point, he began to elaborate. The first period – of the poet who began with *Venus and Adonis*, but who had already, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, begun to see what he had to do – is from artificiality to simplicity, from stiffness to suppleness. The later plays move from simplicity towards elaboration. The late Shakespeare is occupied with the other task of the poet – that of experimenting to see how elaborate, how complicated, the music could be made without losing touch with colloquial speech altogether, and without his characters ceasing to be human beings. This is the poet of *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles*, and *The Tempest*.[17] Of those whose exploration took them in this one direction only, Milton is the greatest master. We may think that Milton, in exploring the orchestral music of language, sometimes ceases to talk a social idiom at all; we may think that Wordsworth, in attempting to recover the social idiom, sometimes oversteps the mark and becomes pedestrian: but it is often true that only by going too far can we find out how far we can go; though one has to be a very great poet to justify such perilous adventures.

So far, I have spoken only of versification and not of poetic structure; and it is time for a reminder that the music of verse is not a line by line matter, but a question of the whole poem. Only with this in mind can we approach the vexed question of formal pattern and free verse. In the plays of Shakespeare a musical design can be discovered in particular scenes, and in his more perfect plays as wholes. It is a music of imagery as well as sound: Mr. Wilson Knight has shown in his examination of several of the plays, how much the use of recurrent imagery and dominant imagery, throughout one play, has to do with the total effect.[18] A play of Shakespeare is a very complex musical structure; the more easily grasped structure is that of forms such as the sonnet, the formal ode, the ballade, the villanelle, rondeau or sestina. It is sometimes assumed that modern poetry has done away with forms like these. I have seen signs of a return to them; and indeed I believe that the tendency to return to set, and even elaborate patterns is permanent, as permanent as the need for a refrain or a chorus to a popular song. Some forms are more appropriate to some languages than to others, and any form may be more appropriate to some periods than to others. At one stage the stanza is a right and natural formalization of speech into pattern. But the stanza – and the more elaborate it is, the more rules to be observed in its proper execution, the more surely this happens – tends to become fixed to the idiom of the moment of its perfection. It quickly loses contact with the changing colloquial speech, being possessed by the mental outlook of a past generation; it becomes discredited when employed solely by those writers who, having no impulse to form within them, have recourse to pouring their liquid sentiment into a ready-made mould in which they vainly hope that it will set. In a perfect sonnet, what you admire is not so much the author's skill in adapting himself to the pattern as the skill and power with which he makes the pattern comply with what he has to say. Without this fitness, which is contingent upon period as well as individual genius, the rest is at best virtuosity: and where the musical element is the only element, that also vanishes. Elaborate forms return: but there have to be periods during which they are laid aside.

As for "free verse," I expressed my view twenty-five years ago by saying that no verse is free for the man who wants to do a good job.[19] No one has better cause to know than I, that a great deal of bad prose has been written under the name of free verse; though whether its authors wrote bad prose or bad verse, or bad verse in one style or in another, seems to me a matter of indifference. But only a bad poet could welcome free verse as a liberation from form. It was a revolt against dead form, and a preparation for new form or for the renewal of the old; it was an insistence upon the inner unity which is unique to every poem, against the outer unity which is typical. The poem comes before the form, in the sense that a form grows out of the attempt of somebody to say something; just as a system of prosody is only a formulation of the identities in the rhythms of a succession of poets influenced by each other.

Forms have to be broken and remade: but I believe that any language, so long as it remains the same language, imposes its laws and restrictions and permits its own licence, dictates its own speech rhythms and sound patterns. And a language is always changing; its developments in vocabulary, in syntax, pronunciation and intonation – even, in the long run, its deterioration – must be accepted by the poet and made the best of. He in turn has the privilege of contributing to the development and maintaining the quality, the capacity of the language to express a wide range, and subtle gradation, of feeling and emotion; his task is both to respond to change and make it conscious, and to battle against degradation below the standards which he has learnt from the past. The liberties that he may take are for the sake of order.

At what stage contemporary verse now finds itself, I must leave you to judge for yourselves. I suppose that it will be agreed that if the work of the last twenty years is worthy of being classified at all, it is as belonging to a period of search for a proper modern colloquial idiom. We have still a good way to go in the invention of a verse medium for the theatre, a medium in which we shall be able to hear the speech of contemporary human beings, in which dramatic characters can express the purest poetry without highfalutin and in which they can convey the most commonplace message without absurdity. But when we reach a point at which the poetic idiom can be stabilized, then a period of musical elaboration can follow. I think that a poet may gain much from the study of music: how much technical knowledge of musical form is desirable I do not know, for I have not that technical knowledge myself. But I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure. I think that it might be possible for a poet to work too closely to musical analogies: the result might be an effect of artificiality; but I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself. The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter. It is in the concert room, rather than in the opera house, that the germ of a poem may be quickened. More than this I cannot say, but must leave the matter here to those who have had a musical education. But I would remind you again of the two tasks of poetry, the two directions in which language must at different times be worked: so that however far it may go in musical elaboration, we must expect a time to come when poetry will have again to be recalled to speech. The same problems arise, and always in new forms; and poetry has always before it, as F. S. Oliver said of politics, an "endless adventure."[20]

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "The third W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture, delivered at Glasgow University in 1942, and published by Glasgow University Press in the same year." As printed in *OPP*; originally published as *The Music of Poetry* (Glasgow: Jackson, Son & Company, 1942). Significant alterations are recorded in the notes.

TSE delivered the lecture on 24 Feb 1942, having accepted an invitation to do so over a year before from Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal of Glasgow University (15 Feb 1941). Despite the long lead time, TSE confessed to Fred Clarke as late as 18 Jan 1942 that he had not yet begun the writing and had other work to complete before he could turn to it. On 2 Feb he told John Hayward that he had "just dashed off" the lecture. He was dissatisfied with the result, describing it to Dorothea Richards on 16 Feb as "not a profound study of aesthetics, as it should be, but a string of scattered observations." Page proofs with holograph corrections are at King's (P1). The lecture was published on 30 Aug 1942. For its original introductory paragraphs, see the textual note.

2†. In *Music*: "the humane taste,"

3†. In *Music*: "those great innovators"

4. On Jespersen and the subjunctive, see "Poetry, Speech and Music" (6.285, n.1).

5. *Pervigilium Veneris* ("The Vigil of Venus") is a strophic poem written, as TSE observes, in accentual meter. Its author and date are debatable, but it is usually ascribed to the second century AD at the earliest. TSE quotes from its final stanza ("*Quando fiam uti chelidon*") in line 428 of *The Waste Land* and identifies it in his notes to the poem (*CPP* 75, 80; *Poems1* 71, 77); he also draws upon its title for "Prufrock's Pervigilium," a canceled section of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (*IMH* 43; *Poems2* 315-16).

6. Thomas Campion, *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602). Much of Bridges's work in what he called "Neo-Miltonic syllabics" was published in his collection *New Verse* (1925); his long poem *The Testament of Beauty* (1929) was also written in quantitative meter. The view of this work expressed in "The Music of Poetry" is consistent with TSE's comments of a decade earlier in *UPUC*: "I do not even believe that the metric of *The Testament of Beauty* is successful, and I have always preferred Dr. Bridges' earlier and more conventional verse to his later experiments" (4.597-98).

7. In "The Jumblies" (1871), the eponymous beings, who have green heads and blue hands but otherwise resemble children, cross the Western Sea in a sieve to experience the Chankly Bore and other exotic lands. The protagonist in "The Dong with a Luminous Nose" (1877) falls in love with a Jumbly Girl and is left heartbroken when she and her fellow Jumblies continue their journey. In "The Courtship of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò" (1877), the hero woos the Lady Jingly Jones with a pastiche of pastoral temptations, only to discover that she – to both their sorrow – is already married. TSE discussed this poem in his 1933 lecture "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry" (4.829).

8. "The Blue Closet" (1858), a dreamlike Pre-Raphaelite poem by Morris. Its resistance to interpretation was noted from its earliest reviews.

9. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poems*, trans. Roger Fry, with commentary by Charles Mauron (London, Chatto & Windus, 1936). TSE may have in mind Mauron's notes on "Surgi de la croupe et du bond," which explain that the speaker in the poem is "a mythological figure painted on the ceiling," although there is no mention here of a tabletop reflection (256-58); and on "Salut," though the foam is said to top a glass of champagne and not of beer (44-45).

10. In his 1801 and 1802 prefaces to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth declares his intention "to bring my language near to the language of men" and to adopt the "simple and unelaborated expressions" of common speech.

11. From "Come down, O maid," a lyric from Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847), concluding: "The moan of doves in immemorial elms, / And murmuring of innumerable bees."

12*. TSE's note: "This is the complementary doctrine to that of the 'touchstone' line or passage of Matthew Arnold: this test of the greatness of a poet is the way he writes his less intense, but structurally vital, matter."

13. Thomas Otway was active in the Restoration theater from 1675 to 1684. Shelley's verse tragedy *The Cenci* was composed and published in 1819.

14. *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1678), Dryden's version of the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra.

15†. In *Music*: "the developers: which might account for what will seem, surely, to a later age, our undue adulation of Donne and depreciation of Milton."

16†. In *Music*: "I have attempted to indicate his dual achievement elsewhere: I can only say here, briefly,"

17. Of the Shakespearean works mentioned in this paragraph, *Venus and Adonis* and *Love's Labour's Lost* are products of the early to middle 1590s; *Antony and Cleopatra* was composed by 1607; *Pericles* was a collaboration of 1607-08; and the other plays are among Shakespeare's last, dating from 1610 to 1611.

18. G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Sombre Tragedies* (London: Oxford UP, 1930). In his introduction to this book, TSE similarly calls attention to "pattern" and to "recurrences of mood and theme": "The genuine poetic drama must, at its best, observe all the regulations of the plain drama, but will weave them *organically* . . . into a much richer design. But our first duty as either critics or 'interpreters,' surely, must be to try to grasp the whole design, and read *character* and *plot* in the understanding of this subterrene or submarine music" (4.150).

19. In "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1917), TSE writes: "*Vers libre* has not even the excuse of a polemic; it is a battle-cry of freedom, and there is no freedom in art. And as the so-called *vers libre* which is good is anything but 'free,' it can better be defended under some other label" (1.512).

20. The title phrase of Oliver's *The Endless Adventure* (1930-35), a three-volume study of parliamentary politics in the first half of the 18th century, refers to the enterprise of statecraft.

TEXTUAL NOTE

This lecture's original introductory paragraphs, published in *The Music of Poetry* but omitted from *OPP*, ran as follows:

I debated with myself for some time before electing, for this occasion, to talk about the subject the nature of which is vaguely indicated by my title. Circumstance and conscience conspire, in these times, to direct our attention to matters of a wider scope and perhaps of more general interest. It seems almost impertinent, even as a man of letters, to concern oneself with a purely literary subject: I find myself tempted to the opposite impertinence of talking about matters beyond my range. Even within my own field, there seem to be questions of greater urgency and relevance: the place of literature in culture, the place of culture itself in the society of the future, and all the educational problems implicit in the cultivation of letters. There are many problems of literature and the arts which lead towards political, sociological and religious speculation; and the question which is in every mind – the question of the condition of society after the war, of its limitations, necessities and possibilities, of its inevitable or of its desirable change – this insistent question might suggest, as a more suitable subject for a formal address on a distinguished foundation, some discussion of the place of literature in a changing world.

If I have resisted this temptation, it is for two reasons, the second of which supports the first. At a time when everyone is interested in the phenomena of change, and when any reflexions on these phenomena, whether analytical or constructive, may command attention if only by stimulating controversy and eliciting contradictory opinion, there is a particular need to consider, now and then, problems which only seem unimportant, because they are no more important now than they always have been and always will be. The prime interest of a practitioner of verse like myself must be in the immediate future; not that we regard the future with either hope or fear, or are moved by either the aspiration or despair of excelling dead masters, but simply because our first concern is always the perennial question, what is to be done next? what direction is unexplored? what is there to be done immediately before us, which has not been done already, once and for all, as well as it can be done? When absorbed in these investigations, the poet is no more concerned with the social consequences than is the scientist in his laboratory – though without the context of the use to society, neither the writer nor the scientist could have the conviction which sustains him. This concern with the future requires a concern with the past also: for in order to know what there is to be done we need a pretty accurate knowledge of what has been done already; and this again leads to examination of those principles and conditions which hold good always, to distinguish them from those which only held good for one or another group of our predecessors.

If my subject is justifiable by its permanence, it is also the more fitting on a foundation designed to perpetuate the memory of W. P. Ker. I never met Ker: it is a cause of regret to me that I missed the one opportunity offered me, which came only a few weeks before his last journey to Switzerland. But I found myself asking the question: what would Ker prefer me to talk about, supposing that he could appraise my abilities and my limitations? Not a subject requiring a parade of learning, certainly; for he would be the first to detect, and the most qualified to denounce, such an imposture. I can think of no other great scholar who would have been more certain to perceive both the difference and the relation between his area and mine, and to condemn any trespass from one area to the other. He was a great scholar who was also a great humanist, who was always aware that the end of scholarship is understanding, and that the end of understanding poetry is enjoyment, and that this enjoyment is gusto

> disciplined by taste. He was remarkable, not only for the comprehensiveness and accuracy of his knowledge of mediaeval and modern European literature, a knowledge with a firm basis of Latin and Greek, but for his ability to enjoy the most diverse species of it, and for the intuition, fortified by a great memory, which enabled him to detect analogies or relationships which few other men, even as learned as he, would have noticed. Each compartment of his learning was at the disposal of every other: a line of modern verse could take him back to Iceland or Provence, or the rhythm of a popular Spanish ballad could evoke half a dozen modern comparisons. I recently read again the posthumous volume of lectures collected under the title of *Form and Style in Poetry* – mostly lecture notes, but Ker always wrote, and must have spoken, well. It is a book from which the poet, as much as the scholar and the general reader, can profit. I think it is worth while, before proceeding to conjectures of my own as to what we mean, or ought to mean, or can mean, when we say that a poem is musical or unmusical, to emphasise the difference between the approach of the scholar and that of the writer of verse.

The reference in the last paragraph is to Ker's *Form and Style in Poetry: Lectures and Notes* (1928).

T. S. Eliot on Poetry in Wartime[1]

Common Sense, 11 (Oct 1942) 351

Not very long after the present war began, people were writing to the newspapers asking: "Where are the war poets?" Various answers were offered, some blaming the younger poets for not turning at once to this subject, others excusing them on one ground or another; but most of the people who interested themselves in the matter seemed to agree that if a nation possesses any literary genius at all, a war ought to produce war poetry. I think that the question was finally dropped, partly because nobody could think of anything more to say, partly because there were plenty of other things to think about. I suspect that most of those who asked the question were not the sort of people who take an intelligent interest in poetry in time of peace. Nevertheless I think that the question is worth considering for a moment, if only to show why it should not be asked. For it does not concern this war only, but all wars; not this country alone, but all countries which pride themselves on their poetry.

When we ask for "war poetry," we may be asking for one or the other of two different things. We may mean patriotic poetry, that is to say poetry which expresses and stimulates pride in the military virtues of a people. Or we may be asking for poets to write poetry arising out of their experience of war. As for the first, we must consider, how very little first-rate poetry of this kind there is in any language – and how little of that has ever been written in the middle of a great war. The greatest war poem of Europe is Homer's *Iliad*: it was not written during the Trojan War; and, although Homer was a Greek, I think that he makes the Greeks appear rather more unpleasant than the Trojans. Dante, no one can doubt, was passionately devoted to his native Florence, and he certainly lived through a period of disorder; but I think that his love of Florence is revealed, not by a recital of her glories, but by his vehement lament over her corruption. At the time of the Napoleonic Wars, both Wordsworth and Goethe were living and working: neither of them can be accused of lack of public spirit, but neither is conspicuous for having made poetry out of the wars of his time.

So, in general, I should say that while a poet, as a man, should be no less devoted to his country than other men, I distinguish between his duty as a man and his duty as a poet. His first duty as a poet is towards his native language, to preserve and to develop that language. As a man, he has the same duties as his fellow-citizens; as a poet, his duty is to write the best poetry he can, and thereby incidentally create something in which his people can take pride. And the artist who will do the most in this way for his own people, will be the artist great enough, like Shakespeare, to give something precious not only to his own country but to the whole of Europe.

When patriotism is a deep enough emotion to be present in great poetry – as in the poetry of Shakespeare and Milton – it is not of the sort that requires the shock of war to set it to work. The beginning of the last war produced an outburst of excellent verse: but the men who were thus stimulated to write were not, I think, any of them real poets. The later stages of the war produced some verse of more permanent value: such as that of Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen, and the more bitter verse of Siegfried Sassoon. This was "war poetry" in its material: but its spirit was more that of sadness and pity than of military glory. Poetry of patriotic intensity can be inspired by the awareness of a foreign threat to native liberty; or by sorrow at defeat; or by indignation at oppression. Tennyson's most famous patriotic poems, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and "The Revenge," both celebrated a struggle against overwhelming odds.[2] There is no first-rate poem about the victory over the Armada, or the Battle of Trafalgar.

I am impressed by the number of young British poets whose work has begun to appear during this war; and I am glad that so little of what they write gives an answer to satisfy the sort of people who ask "where are our war poets?" Some of them, I believe, will turn out – if they survive – to be not poets but prose writers: a short poem is about the only form in which a man on active service has time to express himself. When these poets write about the war, it is mostly about some limited experience, even trivial experience, such as cold, discomfort, or the boredom of waiting at an isolated post. And this is a good thing too, for the bigger experiences need time, perhaps a long time, before we can make poetry of them. You cannot understand war – with the kind of understanding needed for writing poetry – or any other great experience while you are in the midst of it; you can only record small immediate observations. And when, after the war, the experience has become a part of a man's whole past, it is likely to bear fruit in something very different from what, during time of war, people call "war poetry."

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE wrote to John Hayward on 21 July 1942: "I am to address the Swedes, radio-telegraphically, on Friday night, about War Poetry: I understand that it will be arranged in the form of a dialogue, my interlocutor speaking in Swedish for the better instruction of the Swedes in outlying farms, so it should be pretty rum." The broadcast on 24 July was made with Halvor William-Olsson of the BBC's Swedish service. As TSE explained to Hayward two days later, "I provided three pages of text on WAR POETRY, out of which Mr. Olsson arranged an ingenious dialogue: he taking everything in Swedish, and giving me a few interjections such as 'Well, that is very much what I think' etc."

When Selden Rodman, co-founder and co-editor (with Alfred M. Bingham) of the leftist journal *Common Sense*, asked TSE for an essay on poetry and war, TSE replied on 17 Aug: "I have not time, unfortunately, to write anything for your purpose at the moment. But it happened that I had just broadcast to Sweden on this subject, and I enclose the text on which this broadcast was based. There is of course a lot more to be said, a good deal that one would say to an American public and not Swedes, and this may look too simple. If you can use it I think it should be printed explicitly as 'the text of a recent broadcast to Sweden.' In any case, I don't want any money for it." The piece was printed without the requested explanatory note.

2. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854), written a few weeks after the Battle of Balaclava in the Crimean War, recounts a hopeless action by British light cavalry against Russian artillery. "The Revenge" (1878) narrates the resistance and eventual capture of the English galleon Revenge by a Spanish fleet in the Battle of Flores in 1591.

Introductory Note to *Introducing James Joyce: A Selection of Joyce's Prose*, ed. T. S. Eliot

London: Faber & Faber, 1942. Pp. 146; Introductory Note, 5-7.

The reader of the following extracts from the prose works of James Joyce may reasonably ask on what principle the selection has been made. The editor makes no pretence of having chosen what could be called "the best" of Joyce, and indeed maintains that no such principle could be applied, either in a book of this size or a much larger one, to the work of such an author. The later books, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, are too closely constructed, and depend too much upon cumulative effect, for any extracts to be more than those parts easiest to grasp in isolation.[1] I hesitated long over the selections from these two books, being impelled to the choice of one passage or another, at different times, according to mood or the desire to exhibit different aspects. It might have seemed possible to choose "the best" from among the short stories contained in the volume *Dubliners*. My choice, as the finest of these stories, would have been "The Dead" (and I hope that the reader of these selections will have the curiosity to turn next to *Dubliners* and read that story): but, for one thing, "The Dead" is of such a length as to have upset the proportions to be observed; and, for another, I believe that the story which I have chosen leads on much more directly to *A Portrait of the Artist*.[2]

I decided that the best principle of selection by which to make the reader aware of continuity of development between one book and the next, was to take passages in which the author was present either as child or as young man, either as observer or as protagonist. In "The Sisters" the author is merely observer: but the point of the story would be blunted were it not recognized as having been seen through the eyes of a child – and the first thing to grasp in approaching Joyce's work is an appreciation of the Dublin that he knew, as child and as adolescent, in the way that he knew it. The family party scene from *A Portrait*, with its bitter quarrel over Parnell, is executed with the same realism that we find throughout *Dubliners*, and is also included on its own merits. It is the most nearly self-contained extract that one can make from *A Portrait*, and might, by itself, almost be another picture from *Dubliners*: it is also an historical document. Were any rearrangement of order permissible in a volume of posthumous selections like this, it would have been interesting to have followed the scene from the schooldays of Stephen Dedalus (the author) directly by the scene from *Ulysses* in which Stephen is himself the schoolmaster. But I believe that with this autobiographical thread the reader will find that the transition from the style of *A Portrait of the Artist* to that of *Ulysses* presents no difficulty.

The task of selection proved more arduous with *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. The former is divided, as everyone knows, into episodes each bearing some relation to one of the episodes in the *Odyssey*. Wishing to choose passages as nearly as possible complete in themselves, I have found my choice restricted to the earlier part of the book. The later episodes not only tend to be longer, but are less comprehensible in isolation. Had I followed the principle of making a larger number of shorter extracts, or quotations, I could have followed more closely and continuously the development (as well as the variety) of the writing: but while such an anthology might be interesting and illuminating to those who already know the texts well, it could hardly be anything but confusing as an "introduction" for new readers. There are passages which I should have liked to include, which would have lessened the abruptness of the transition from *Ulysses* to *Finnegans Wake*: but as it is style rather than content that would have justified them, such inclusions would have altered the form and the purpose of this volume.[3]

The selections from *Finnegans Wake* are inevitably those which are most open to the charge of arbitrariness. I think, however, that most readers of that massive work would agree to the choice of the passage which was published separately, before the completion of the whole work, as "Anna Livia Plurabelle." This fantasy of the course of the river Liffey is the best-known part of *Finnegans Wake*, and is the best introduction to it. It was recorded by the author: I have found that the gramophone record of the author's voice reciting it revealed at once a beauty which is disclosed only gradually by the printed page. As for the final passage of *Finnegans Wake*, with which I end – a passage which becomes, deliberately, more lucid as the dreamer of the book approaches waking consciousness – I cannot believe that its tragic eloquence can fail to impress even the unprepared reader.[4]

The reader who wishes to consult introductory explanations of the man may be referred to the *Biography* by Herbert Gorman, and the shorter *James Joyce* by Harry Levin.[5] Stuart Gilbert's *Ulysses* is the standard analysis of the structure of that work; and *An Exagmination of Work in Progress*, containing essays by various hands, is a useful introduction to *Finnegans Wake*.[6]

T. S. E.

NOTES

1. *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), Joyce's last major works.

2. *Dubliners* (1914), Joyce's early book of short stories, begins with TSE's choice, "The Sisters," and closes with "The Dead." The Bildungsroman *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) was Joyce's next book publication. In *ASG*, TSE discusses "The Dead" alongside stories by Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence, concluding that Joyce is "the most ethically orthodox of the more eminent writers of my time" (5.31); in "A Message to the Fish" (1941), he calls "The Dead" "one of the finest short stories in the language" (6.158).

3. *Ulysses* is represented in TSE's selection by the whole of episodes 2 ("Nestor") and 6 ("Hades") and the opening pages of episode 12 ("Cyclops").

4. In addition to the two passages from *Finnegans Wake* just mentioned, TSE includes the fable of "The Mookse and the Gripes." TSE had arranged for Faber and Faber to publish "Anna Livia Plurabelle" separately as No. 15 in the Criterion Miscellany series (1930).

5. Herbert S. Gorman, *James Joyce: A Definitive Biography* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939); Harry Levin, *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1941). Gorman (1893-1954) was an American novelist, Levin (1912-94) an American literary scholar. In an arrangement brokered by TSE, Faber & Faber brought out a UK edition of Levin's book in 1944.

6. *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (London: Faber & Faber, 1930), by Stuart Gilbert. *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (Paris: Shakespeare & Co., 1929) is a collection of essays on *Finnegans Wake* by Samuel Beckett and others; it draws its title from that book, segments of which were published between 1924 and 1938 as *Work in Progress*. On 20 Mar 1936, TSE arranged for Faber & Faber to purchase the remaining stock of *Our Exagmination* from Sylvia Beach, writing, "we should be glad to undertake a certain responsibility in connection with such a book." Faber then took over distribution of the volume with a new cover and title page bearing the firm's imprint.

Notes for a Discussion on *The Anvil*

The following notes were prepared for a panel discussion on the BBC's controversial religious program, *The Anvil*, created as an offshoot of the *Brains Trust* program after the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, protested the latter's "irreverent disregard for revealed truths in the Holy Scriptures." *The Anvil* began weekly evening broadcasts on 7 Jan 1943. The lay chairman, Professor Victor Murray, and the panelists represented three strands of British Christianity: Anglican, Free Church, and Roman Catholic. Mary Trevelyan, TSE's close friend and an Anglican panelist, wrote to him on 7 Oct 1942: "On Friday I am once more incarcerated with the Relig. Brains Trust for the day. They are going to try me out as Chairman I believe. Perhaps that will be easier than answering such questions as 'If God made everything, who made evil?' in two minutes. The whole thing is being very difficult and I am not sure that it isn't a Mistake, but I'm so sorry for the people who are trying to organise it that I feel I can't leave them in the lurch." The team endeavored "to give honest Christian answers to listeners' doubts, difficulties, and enquiries." TSE's notes were evidently prepared for Trevelyan, to whom he sent them. He wrote to John Hayward on 25 Jan 1943: "Please listen in some time to THE ANVIL, the Religious Brains Trust on Thursday evenings, and tell me whether I could bear it: my persistent friend Mary Trevelyan keeps asking me to listen and I never remember." When she asked his opinion after the close of the first series, he replied on 8 Mar, "I don't know what to say about the Anvil." The unsigned single-page typescript at the Houghton (MS Am 1691.2, 224) is dated 1942 in Trevelyan's hand and titled on a separate leaf: "Also Notes for a Discussion on THE ANVIL."

I think that the proper sense of RETRIBUTION is either (a) pagan: whether conceived as a kind of physical law of compensation, or as spiritualised in anangke, atē, dirae, norns, fate, weird sisters etc.[1] or (b) as the act of God. It can be carried out by human agency, of course, but not by human intention. Retribution is implicitly just, and human action, in so far as it is related to human intention, cannot ever be wholly just and therefore cannot be conscious retribution.

Distinguished from PUNISHMENT, which is behaviour of society towards an individual conceived as a member of that society. In this sense we do not PUNISH an animal; our correction is merely a DETERRENT. In criminal punishment there is CORRECTION and DETERRENCE also. (To treat a criminal as merely diseased is to diminish his human dignity, which we have to do with the undoubtedly insane.)

Essential difference between what is allowed to a society towards its members, and what is allowed to one or more nations to their neighbours.

Individual Germans can be punished for individual crimes. Germany cannot be punished for collective crimes. (Difficulty in practice of saying what is what.) Towards a nuisance nation you can only adopt attitude of PREVENTION (you can jolly well see that they don't get a chance to do it again) and within limits COMPENSATION (give back what you have stolen and help put things in some sort of order).

If we took it upon ourselves to confer RETRIBUTION upon the Germans we should be doing ourselves moral injury, and also conniving at crimes against the Germans by their neighbours. I think that crimes of individuals should be tried in the countries in and towards which the crimes have been committed: this will probably lead to gross miscarriage of justice, but that is the business of the country concerned and not ours. Only criminals whose misbehaviour has directly affected several countries should be tried in international courts.

An attitude of Retribution also has the risk of taking our eye off the main thing, which is to protect ourselves in the future. Also HUBRIS. Of course we want to see 'em suffer; but it is much safer to be conscious of that desire and not call it RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE.

My impression is that this does not agree with what the Archbishop said.[2] But you want to see his text first. A remark at some point to the effect that Vansittart's view [is] less un-Christian than [the] Archbishop's might put the Anvil into the headlines.[3]

P.S. Firm can't give away books like that – where would it stop? therefore let Hon. No. 1 Boy accept it as personal gift.[4]

With regard to foreign nations, the maxim of Old Foxey (parent of Sampson and Sally Brass) is to be adopted: ALWAYS SUSPECT EVERYBODY.[5]

NOTES

1. Anangke, the personified Greek divinity of Necessity, whose daughters, the three Fates, determine the destiny of mortals; Atē, the Greek goddess personifying destructive impulse;

Dirae, the equivalent in Roman mythology of the Greek Erinyes or Furies (the Eumenides in TSE's *The Family Reunion*), the three female spirits who relentlessly pursue humans guilty of crimes of impiety, especially parricide; the Norns, three demigoddesses in Norse mythology who control the destinies of gods and mortals; the Weird Sisters, three witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* who both foretell the protagonist's destiny and lead him on to it.

2. Archbishop Temple addressed the idea of punishment in "Britain and Germany after the War," a sermon of 18 Oct 1942 at St. Jude's, Hampstead, as reported in the *Times* on 19 Oct: "German Crimes / Dr. Temple on Demand for Punishment / Two Lines of Punishment." Temple held that punishment and retribution had to be "short term," while the long-term approach to Germany had to be forgiveness and renewed fellowship: "There ought to be such expression of the moral condemnation of recent German policy as could not fail to bring home to the German people what was the moral judgment of the world concerning them. On the other hand, there must, in the long-term policy, be provision that the coming generations should be able to recognize the position given to them in the world as fair" (2).

3. The British diplomat Sir Robert Vansittart (1881-1957) held an unrelenting hard line against forgiving Germany for atrocities in his *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (1941). In *Lessons of My Life* (1942), he describes how his unforgiving attitude became widely known as "Vansittartism," a doctrine prescribing the occupation, demilitarization, and reeducation of Germany to prevent further wars of conquest.

4. TSE's phrase echoes the fictional detective Charlie Chan's customary introduction of his eldest son, Lee, as "Honorable Number One Son" in the popular series of Charlie Chan films. Mary Trevelyan's letters to TSE do not reveal the requested book or recipient.

5. The craven attorney Sampson Brass in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) reminds his sister, the "dragon" Miss Sally, "You will not have forgotten that it was a maxim with Foxey – our revered father . . . – 'Always suspect everybody.' That's the maxim to go through life with!" (chapter LXVI). The siblings' deceased father was "called 'old Foxey' by his friends from his extreme sagacity."

Punctuating Joyce

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 126 (1 Jan 1943) 4

Sir, – My attention has been called to the notice of my book of selections from the prose of James Joyce, in your issue of December 11. In this notice, your reviewer says: "Mr. Eliot has taken pity on the newcomer by separating sentences and punctuating them."[1]

If this sentence refers to my introduction, it suggests that it has been my habit in writing prose to run my sentences together without punctuation. If, on the other hand, it refers to the selections of Joyce's texts, the sentence suggests that I have tampered with the author's arrangement.

I should like to make clear to your readers that to the best of my knowledge and belief the text used in *Introducing James Joyce* is identical with that in Mr. Joyce's several books as passed for publication by the author.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. A brief review of TSE's *Introducing James Joyce* in the *Church Times* of 11 Dec 1942 comments: "Joyce is not easily comprehended under the most favourable conditions; and in small doses, even with the help of Mr. Eliot, the reader may be forgiven if he wonders at Joyce's reputation. Mr. Eliot has taken pity on the newcomer by separating sentences and punctuating them. At any rate, he has made a respectable man of the author" (669).

2. On TSE's selections for *Introducing James Joyce*, see his "Introductory Note" and its annotations (6.329).

Is a Christian Society Possible?

The American clergyman Charles Clayton Morrison (1874-1966), editor of *The Christian Century*, a nondenominational weekly based in Chicago, wrote to TSE on 10 Oct 1942, inviting him to contribute to a series titled "British Christianity Speaks for Itself." Morrison suggested the article's title – a question inspired, he said, by his regard for *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) – and promised that the article would reach "the entire leadership of American Christianity as well as our academic and social-minded leadership." Other contributors included J. H. Oldham, who encouraged TSE to participate; Sir Richard Acland; Hewlett Johnson; John Baillie; and Leslie D. Weatherhead.

TSE sent his typescript to Morrison on 5 Jan 1943. Uncertain of its suitability, he assured Morrison that he "need feel no embarrassment in rejecting it, should it appear ill adapted to the needs and requirements of *The Christian Century*." Morrison's response on 29 Jan bore out TSE's concerns. Professing hesitation but writing bluntly, Morrison admitted to "a sense of disappointment" with TSE's failure to provide "a constructive answer to the question" of whether a Christian Society was possible:

> Your answer seems to be, so far as the main body of your article deals with it, that we must avoid a premature union of the churches. In this negative thesis you make your point clear enough . . . but I feel that your article ought constructively to discuss the nature of a Christian society and the possibility of achieving it. A paragraph could be devoted to your premature union thesis, but the body of the article would be greatly helped if you faced your question more constructively.[1]

He thus returned the article, "hoping that you will wish to reconceive your treatment as a positive contribution rather than merely a warning against a pitfall." TSE replied on 17 Mar, pleading a lack of time and admitting that "even were I given enough time I could not be sure of giving satisfaction in a rewrite." The typescript (8 pp., with pen-and-ink corrections) was never revised or published.

The Editor of *The Christian Century* has proposed to me that I should attempt to answer this question. While it is not a question to which a simple affirmative or negative reply is possible, it is one which can, I think, give rise to interesting by-products, and is therefore worth considering. And in view of the fact that I have devoted a small book to prefatory examination of the nature of Christian Society, there is perhaps some necessity for a postscript or interim statement.

We must recognise, first of all, that there is one interpretation of the question to which we cannot give anything but an affirmative answer. The words which we repeat in the Lord's Prayer, if I understand them, pledge us to direct our lives towards the realisation of the Kingdom on earth: for whatever we pray for, we commit ourselves to work for, in ignorance of the extent to which the human will can participate. It is superfluous for me to attempt to elicit, in the space which I am to occupy, the disastrous consequences to which a negative answer would lead us. Furthermore, this is a question for the trained theologian: and I am aware that theologians can disagree. I only mention it for the purpose of keeping it distinct from the same question on the plane with which I am concerned, which is that of my book. It is not the question whether we should aspire to, or hope for, the realisation of the Kingdom on Earth; it is not the question of helping towards its realisation by the spirituality of our lives: it is the question, how far is a Christian Society possible as an aim of our social planning, and on the political plane?

I tried to make clear in my book, the difference between our present-day society and that of any place or period in the past in which we could say that society was Christian, in the sense of a definitely Christian pattern of culture, and the question there implied was, can we or should we aim at a future society which should be Christian in the same way and to at least the same extent? Certainly, if we have this aim, we should not take it to imply the reconstitution, like a village at a World's Fair, of any period of the past; we can indeed say, that no past age ever was, or ever will be, good enough as a whole to be worth going back to; our aim implies the assumption that we shall not surrender any of the positive benefits of progress throughout the centuries, and that we should not do so – even though there is considerable discrimination of real and illusory benefits to be undertaken – for we know that such a restoration would be a retrogression, and that our task is to revive the spirit, not the form, and to constitute a Christendom of the future in the terms of the future.

The question has to be asked, however, what direct means, if any, we can employ to create a Christian Society in this sense. In my book I was only concerned to give precision to the meaning, in the belief that it was not unreasonable to hope that what had been actual in the past was possible in the conditions of the future. I maintained that every culture of the past had had a religious basis – something that we are apt to forget, having experience only of a disintegrated culture – and that if our society in the future was to have any cultural pattern at all, it must be a religious pattern: so that our only choice, if choice there was, would lie between the Christian and some other religious faith. I believed that if we kept this idea firmly in mind, it should influence insensibly our conscious re-shaping of the details of our social structure, and give us a measure by which to criticise the modifications which we do make. At the very least, it makes a difference whether, in compromising, we are conscious that it is compromise, and do not deceive ourselves into thinking that a change which is merely the most or the best that can be achieved in the circumstances, represents the fruition of our aims. But into consideration of the question: what should we do *now* in the conscious aim of bringing into existence a Christian society, several calculations enter, the nature of which it behoves us to examine.

We cannot, obviously, consider a society "Christian" unless the great majority of its members believe the Christian faith: that is to say, that so far as each individual believes *anything* what he believes will be the Christian faith. For the capacity for believing *anything* varies from individual to individual, and for the larger part of the population the most of belief will express itself rather in behaviour than in consciousness – in observance of religious practices, however irregular and however perfunctory, and in recognition of Christian laws of conduct however flagrantly they break them.[2] The obvious task is that of evangelisation and conversion. This always remains necessary. But while, on the one hand, a Christian society can only be brought about by multiplying Christians, on the other hand the great mass of people find it difficult, if not impossible, to be Christians except in a Christian society. To be a Christian, in the present state of the world, is immensely difficult even for those with the exceptional gift of vocation and the initial advantage of a Christian family background: the majority will be, and always have been, people who will be Christians in a Christian society, pagan in a pagan society, and nothing in a neutral society. We should therefore expect to find, if a restored Christendom came into being, that beyond the permanent resources which Christians must never fail to employ to bring it about – the work of evangelisation and the testimony of dedicated and sacrificial lives – a number of causes, social, political, economic, had concurred. The question is, can any such forces be deliberately set in motion in our present world? We reject, of course, the means of *compulsion* by the seizure of power. It is extremely unlikely that Christians could find themselves in a position to exercise such power; and if they were genuine Christians they would not exercise it. The notion of an imposed Christianity is abhorrent to the Anglo-Saxon mind: we may be sure that whatever authoritarianism we may come to enjoy, it will not be Christian.

I do not see any means possible except the slow process of making clear to ourselves and to others what a Christian society would be like, what a positive non-Christian society would be like, and what our present society is like; for the first step towards making people believe that anything is possible, is to get them to see that it is to their interest. You can only expect to influence directly the more intelligent, open-minded and thoughtful, leaving it to them to influence others: until a large number of people come to want such a condition, there is no hope of bringing it about, and indeed no point in doing so. And this purpose can only be realised, not by a body of people disciplined to accept orders and carry out a programme formulated for them, but by many people each finding the means to effect some slight difference in his own peculiar circumstances and within his own limited field of action. Beyond this, there are, I believe, reasons why we ought not, at the present time, to welcome efforts which, by reducing the aims to the level of political action, would jeopardise the essential spiritual meaning and tend to produce a flimsy substitute for the real thing.

For even when we are utterly convinced of what is desirable, in any field of action, there may, in the particular situation, be conditions to deter us from proceeding. It may be that there is a particular tendency to substitute an immediate aim for a distant goal; or that the means likely to commend themselves are such as are liable to jeopardise ultimate values; or it may simply be that there are other currents of thought and feeling which will combine in an unfortunate way. A common zeal for a Christian society is not enough without a common notion of what is essential to a Christian society: and this cannot be arrived at merely through verbal agreement, but is something that can only come about through a slow process of growth. The gravest dangers that I can perceive at present are those of dilution and secularisation. I can, naturally, only speak of the situation as I see it in England: how far what I say is applicable in America is for my readers to decide.

The danger of dilution arises with that of the premature unification of various Christian bodies. That communication and cooperation between sects should be forwarded in every way possible, is, I presume, contested by no one; and the value of such cooperation cannot be measured only by the effectiveness of such common action as is possible at present, in the face of common dangers. Its less calculable value lies in the growth of understanding, the decline of prejudice, in the sympathy that springs from conversation and friendship; and the growth of these human relationships will, in the long run, help us to understand the theological differences – differences which, in the case of the larger denominations, have centuries of development behind them. The doctrinal differences may in the end be soluble: the immediate aim should be to strip them of the accretions of habit and prejudice, and eliminate all differences that are not essential. But when these are disposed of, there will remain some differences which are fundamental, upon which, if the division is to be healed, one body or another must simply give way and be converted. Unity is not attainable by compromise; and it is not attained by identifying the doctrines held in common with what is essential. By this route, unification would be obtained by either reducing Christian faith to the minimum, to the lowest common factor of all types of belief, or by conniving at[3†] a latitude of interpretation of common formulae, which would be an element of dissolution and decay which would begin to operate at once.

This unification by minimal belief would give strength to another danger, that of secularisation: a premature unanimity of Christians among themselves would facilitate a dangerous unification with the State. There is a tendency for those States, whose peoples repudiate the doctrines of secular totalitarianism, to seek for a political philosophy equally far-reaching but more securely based; and, in so doing, to extend their functions beyond anything previously expected of them. In this search, not for a political philosophy, but for the political philosophy assumed to be implicit in their traditions, they come to find it in the Christian background. But in this process of developing self-consciousness, they are faced with a dilemma to be overcome: when the Christianity, which previously was actual, not in the State, but in the society, is restored not through the society but through the State, it must if restored entire appear as an irksome imposition upon those (the majority) who accept but little of it in their lives: alternatively, if it is restored in a form in which it will be acceptable to the majority, it will fall very far short of what practicing Christians regard as Christianity. The tendency will be for the State to take from Christianity only as much as is useful for its own purposes: the vocabulary of a vague theism and a rearrangement of the ethical values. The danger, for instance, of a unified educational system with uniform Christian teaching included in the curriculum, is that the degree of Christianity recognised by the State will come to be accepted as the whole of Christianity, or as all that is essential.

We should, in this process, get something which would appear to many sincere Christians as the realisation of a "Christian society"; and the temptation of the goal of a partial Christian society may make them willing to surrender what are perhaps essentials. We are so painfully aware of the millions, in a society which has the tradition of Christianity, who grow to maturity completely ignorant – not merely unbelieving, but in darkness – and whose rules of behaviour are not merely non-Christian, but hardly even social – that in simple compassion and honest conscience we may concede more than we are aware of conceding, and of forgetting that the first duty of the Church is to preserve its doctrine and its highest standards of spiritual life.

This is a danger which cannot be overcome except in the actual conditions in which it becomes realised. A mere dogged obstinacy will not do – or the situation does not yet call for it. But the development of the State upon consciously Christian principles, together with an increasing fusion of religious denominations within the same nation, on the assumption that what these denominations accept in common is the essence of Christianity, and that those matters on which they differ are matters of indifference,[4†] might concur towards producing a kind of National Christianity which would in the long run obstruct, instead of advance, the cause of genuine reunion of Christendom. Its nationalism might get the better of its Christianity; it might risk the greatest apostasy of pursuing secular aims covered by a Christian vocabulary. There is a danger that when we say "society" we may mean "the State." A Christian society is not constituted simply by a unification of Church and State, whether this unification takes the form of putting political control into the hands of religious leaders, or of subordinating religion as a department of state: its reality is manifested rather in a tension between Church and State. What I have said is not inspired by a spirit of negation or of obdurate and uncritical obstruction to the tendencies of our time; but only by an anxiety that one thing shall not be mistaken for another.

NOTES

1. Morrison's reaction, as TSE perhaps anticipated, may be attributable in part to his commitment to ecumenism. The *Christian Century* ran numerous articles on church union in 1943, and Morrison himself would shortly become a prominent supporter of the World Council of Churches.

2. This passage echoes *ICS*: “For the great mass of humanity . . . their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour” (5.697).

3†. In the TS, “conniving at” is typed interlineally above “encouraging”; no final reading is indicated.

4†. Alteration in ink; originally: “private judgement,”

Notes towards a Definition of Culture[1]

I

I wish first to try to make clear the sense or senses in which I propose to use the word *culture* throughout the following articles. It will be remembered that Matthew Arnold laid down that culture is the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world.[2] Without necessarily accepting or rejecting this definition within its own limits, I am not here concerned with the culture which the individual may envisage as an ideal or set himself to acquire, but with the culture that a whole society may develop and transmit. I wish to keep in relation two meanings of the word which tend to become separated: each of which should be present when we intend the other. The first meaning is that which first suggests itself: that of a refinement of living, including appreciation of philosophy and the arts, among the upper levels of society. The second is the more fundamental: it is what we imply when we speak of *Primitive Culture*. It is the whole complex of behavior, thought and feeling, expressing itself in custom, in art, in political and social organization, in religious structure and religious thought, which we can perceive most clearly as a whole in the less advanced societies, but which is equally present as the peculiar character of the most highly developed people or nation. It is what we mean when we speak of *a* culture, instead of culture without the article. These two meanings, that of the culture of a class and that of the culture of a whole people, have to be kept distinct but always in relation. For it is a part of my thesis that there is no "culture" without "a culture," and no culture of a class or of an individual unless there is a living culture in the people to which that class or individual belongs, however remote the most highly and the least developed individuals of that people may appear superficially to be from each other.

It is obvious that amongst the more primitive communities the several parts of culture are inextricably interwoven. The Dyak who spends a season building, carving and painting his barque of the peculiar design required for the annual ritual of head-hunting, is exercising several cultural activities at once; there is no occasion for him to specify which particular service he is rendering to his community, to himself or to his gods. As civilization advances a considerable degree of occupational specialization may evince itself: in the New Hebrides certain islands are said to specialise in particular arts and crafts, and exchange their wares, or display their accomplishments, to the reciprocal satisfaction of the members of the archipelago.[3] But while the individuals of a tribe may have, like the king or the witch-doctor, separate functions, it is only at a much further stage that a capacity for abstracting from each other religion, science, politics and art appears. And just as the functional activities of individuals tend to become hereditary, and hereditary function tends to harden into class distinction, and class distinction leads to class conflict, so do religion, politics, science and art reach a point at which they dispute amongst themselves and lay claims against each other. This friction is, at some stages, highly creative: how far it is the result, and how far the cause, of increased consciousness need not here be considered. The tension within the society is a tension also within the mind of the superior individual: only a very advanced stage of civilization could produce the *Antigone* – for the clash of laws must have taken place in society before it could be made articulate by the dramatist and meet the response from an audience which the dramatist's art requires.[4] In Greece there appears to have been a development of the philosophical mind with which the religious consciousness failed to keep pace: hence the problems of the Greek dramatists, and the eventual hypertrophy of scepticism. For the less speculative Romans, what happened was rather the failure of the religious pattern to develop with their expanding political organization. In the mediaeval world a European synthesis of religion and philosophy, of faith and free enquiry, of devotion and art, appeared to reach, with a precarious tension between Church and State, its nearest approximation. And it was in the disintegration of *a* culture, that, with the Renaissance, began the efflorescence of what the nineteenth century, already somewhat retrospectively, was to call "culture."

It is commonly observed that any developing society tends to greater functional complexity; that function leads to class; that classes persist after their functions have disappeared; and that hereditary function becomes hereditary pretension. An upper class which has come to exist only for itself, deprived, by its own folly or incompetence, or by circumstances beyond its control, of its functional relation to the rest of society, may be disposed of in several ways. It may be ignored as in France, extirpated as in Russia, or diluted as in England. But the duties which it has failed to fulfil are not all taken over by another class, or by society as a whole, and the mere removal of an inefficient class does not solve the problems of society. A society which has preserved enough vitality to recover from its own revolutions will probably evolve slowly a new upper class, integrated with the rest of the community as its predecessor was not, and with it a new culture. But at this stage we are not concerned with such mutations, but with the possibility of the preservation and growth of such culture as we have. With the decay of an upper class, or more precisely of an upper middle class, its cultural values tend to disappear also; and the question to consider is whether modern society – in any country – has enough vitality to preserve its fundamental culture and to adapt it to modern conditions, and to adapt modern conditions to it.

No healthy society, however little advanced, is without its own culture: some have become, through adverse circumstances or some radical error, definitely retrograde; others have been demoralized through association with more advanced cultures. For if a culture is a whole, the effect upon it of a higher civilization is to disintegrate it, and to impose upon the minds of its members a greater strain than they can bear. To alter the land tenure system, the marriage customs, or the administration of justice in a savage tribe may be to replace the worse by the better, but it is attended with great and often unpredictable perils: tamper with the pattern of primitive culture at one point, and the whole structure may fall to pieces. I mention the influence of a higher culture upon a lower, only as a preparation to considering what a higher culture may do to itself. The abuses of a rigidly stratified society, giving rise to a sense of injustice which stirs the forces of revolution, represent only the more political aspect of deterioration, and produce an over-emphasis upon the political element in culture. Other aspects of decline are to be seen in other separations of activities and groups than those immediately related to political and economic conditions. Religion, philosophy and art each becomes a distinct province, cultivated by a different group of people. The artistic sensibility is impoverished by its separation from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic, and the vestige of *manners* may be left to those who, having their sensibility uninformed, either by religion or by art, and their minds unfurnished with the material for witty conversation, have nothing left but an inherited behaviour which ceases to have meaning. Culture shrinks to the ambit of a group, a group not necessarily identical with any class, but equally cut off from organic relation to the whole of society, and eventually expires. We have to consider whether the modern world is hostile, not merely to any particular and antiquated form of culture, but to culture in any form. And that does not mean hostile to the satisfactions of a limited number of persons in any nation, but hostile to the proper development of the nations themselves.

II

If a conflict between modern civilisation and true culture exists, this is not a merely political malady, and is therefore beyond a merely political cure. Indeed, both nationalism and internationalism, the one by applying unnatural methods, for extraneous purposes, to the forcing of local culture, and the other by attempting to ignore local differences of soil and climate, can do more harm than good. An artificial centralisation is reacted against by an equally artificial regionalism. With the motives for cultural regionalism, including the preservation of existing languages, one cannot but have warm sympathy. For the expression of imaginative reality, for the truths of poetry and of religion, a man is best equipped when he uses the language of his ancestors, shaped by a particular racial sensibility and capable of conveying the messages of the inherited imagination: science and commerce would find one common abstract medium of communication more convenient, and the prestige of the languages of a few dominant peoples has therefore been exaggerated by an age of science and commerce – though without nourishing the imaginative resources of these languages. It is true that in the past the combination of racial strains and of different linguistic elements, and the supersession of various dialects by one standard speech, have made most important contributions to culture: but it is of the present that I am speaking.

The effects of an industrial civilisation have combined to deprive the mass of humanity of its native culture: a culture which, with laborious inefficiency or in spasms of alarm, we endeavour to supply by education and enlightenment. The assemblage of masses of men in large centres for mechanical occupations, the mobility of labour (a mobility which labour instinctively resists), the separation of work and play, tend to destroy culture at the root. These are commonplaces of observation from which people proceed to make recommendations: but instead of proposing cures which may be only palliatives, we have first to understand what culture is, what are its relations to the fundamentals of religion and the departments of human activity, and what has happened to it. Only thus can we break down the two alternative, but equally obstinate, prejudices: the first, that culture is a matter of museums, of academic research, or a pastime for a small and futile group; the second (which I may call the mercantile view of culture), that it is something which has heretofore been the possession of a privileged few and which will, in a new order, be shared by all equally.

The shrinkage of the area of culture is accompanied with a shrinkage of the meaning of the word. I have already suggested that, while the disappearance of popular culture has concentrated the meaning of the word to the culture of the "privileged classes," the whole of even that culture has become so split up, that it is doubtful whether many members of the privileged classes are in possession of more than one or another fragment of it. Culture has come to mean hardly more than the appreciation of the arts, and this small area is again divided into that of those who interest themselves in contemporary art and that of those who care only for established art. When *The Times*, in a leading article, some time ago, made an indiscriminate attack upon modern literature, it was clear that the "common man" for whom it professed to speak was the common upper middle-class man – who, having presumably had unreserved opportunity for acquiring that culture which is inaccessible to his inferiors, is apparently the most implacable enemy of the "highbrow."[5] The point I wish to make would be quite lost if it were supposed that I made it for the purpose of defending contemporary literature. While I object to criticism which either praises or denounces authors as a group, instead of on their individual performance, I am quite willing to admit (though without necessarily admitting the moral charges with which *The Times* confused its case) the frailties of modern art and literature. The artist is, at best, making the best he can of a disintegrated state of society; at worst, he is merely the victim of it. He has not the advantage of participating in a larger society in which his own activities, together with others', receive critical appreciation; and he has no such society to write for. So the background is reduced: and if the artist in such a situation is inclined to exaggerate the importance of his art, that is his reaction to a world which is indifferent, scornful, amused or frightened.

The shrinkage of the meaning of the word "culture" to cultivation of art and the restriction of interest in the arts to small and somewhat isolated groups in various capitals, are not unrelated to the disappearance of original culture from the larger areas of the globe, and the very slight development of original culture in areas of colonisation. In the field of the arts, it has been noticeable for at least a generation, that success in painting and sculpture meant success in Paris. The more gifted painters of every nation tended to settle in this centre, where only were to be found the critical standards, and the society and emulation of equals, without which an artist suffers. Paris, being the centre of production, was very naturally also the central market for an international clientèle: as the art itself became international, so did the public of the necessary means and taste. In literature, the centres were naturally the capital cities of the most important languages – most important, that is, both because of the numbers of people to whom those languages were native, and the economic and political importance of their nations. For the English-speaking peoples, the centre has always been London, though during the last twenty-five years, New York has acquired a cultural autonomy of its own – an independence not unconnected with the growing financial and economic power of the United States.

Up to a point, this centralisation is a healthy development. When the area from which the intellectual elements of the capital are drawn is not too large, and when the capital itself is not of immoderate size, much is gained, in stimulation of thought and of the arts, as in refinement of manners, from the existence of such a centre for superior society. But in culture, as in industry, there should be a balance between town and country. The parallel is not intended to be drawn closely: for in the matter under discussion, what is desirable is an organic relationship of culture between the capital, the country, and also the provincial towns. When there is excessive concentration in the capital, the effect on the provinces is obviously bad; but the effect on the capital, and on its intellectual and appreciative society, is also bad, as that society becomes more and more wholly urban-minded. The tendency in England has been somewhat counteracted by the attachment to the land for which the English are still distinguished, even though that attachment is for most of the more prosperous middle-class townsfolk represented only by the vestigial symbol of the week-end cottage: in America, where the upper strata of modern society are mostly of urban origin, the divorce between culture and agriculture is more evident – the farmer has been presented, for several generations, as a comic but unknown character. But the prospect for the future is equally sombre for all of the more advanced peoples. The balance between town and country, between agriculture and industry, may be restored by careful planning; something may be done to check, if not to diminish, the growing size of each metropolis: but it is likely enough that by that time "culture" will have become so discredited, and the groups in power so impervious to all that it comprehends, that it will find no cranny in which to sprout. Such might be the outcome even without any sudden transfer of power to any other groups than those which now control our economic and political navigation.

So far have we proceeded already in the direction of a cultureless society that the foregoing considerations may seem to most readers in these times to be of only trifling importance. I do not present them therefore simply as what you may have taken them to be, another faint plea for "recognition of the arts" – a plea for subsidizing activities no longer appreciated, useful or desired, or for the preservation of wind-mills:[6] the importance of culture in *this* sense lies in its vital relation to culture in the other sense, and consequently to problems which we must sooner or later face whether we will or no. If I speak of the diffusion of culture in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (indicated by the number of places in which books, and serious books too, were printed and published); of the past importance of such centres as Norwich and Bristol – to say nothing of Edinburgh in the time of George IV – it is not from any sentimental regionalism.[7] These are world and imperial problems to-day: they concern our relations with the Dominions; with India, where we early endeavoured to plant an English system of education to the detriment of the cultivation of the Indian classical languages by Indians; in the West Indies, where several races have taken root without bringing their original culture or forming a new one of their own.[8] The causes of friction in the modern world are not solely political or economic: one of them is a widespread cultural dissatisfaction and unrest. And the cultural problem, as I shall attempt to urge presently, is inseparable from the religious problem.

III

One of the questions which is beginning to be discussed is that of the formation of "élites" in democratic or mass society.[9]* The analysis by Karl Mannheim in *Man and Society* is particularly valuable, as an account of what has happened and is happening. While it does not give us much guidance as to what is to be done, it provides a salutary reminder of the conditions under which a proper élite is formed, and the dangers latent in any state of society in which the selection is on the basis of *achievement* alone. "It is possible," he says, "that in such a society, the succession of the élites would take place much too rapidly and social continuity, which is essentially due to the slow and gradual broadening of the influence of the dominant groups, would be lacking in it" [91]. In his three principles upon which selection has been based – blood, property and achievement – Mannheim seems to me to have in mind only the ordinary "aristocratic" conception of *blood* (social position, founded on the possession of land for a number of generations) and to ignore what are for our purposes the more important aspects, those of transmitted aptitudes and domestic environment.[10] The inheritance of a particular high level of culture is what matters, and it is only incidental that the maintenance of such a family tradition has been largely dependent upon a settled social position and the continuance of a degree of material affluence. The development of a superior culture among people would seem to me to depend upon the maintenance of such an hereditary élite, refreshed by the addition and assimilation of new members – provided that the rush of new recruits is at no time so numerous as to be overwhelming – by the adoption of those individuals of exceptional gifts who possess the sole qualification of *achievement*. Such is a general description of what has happened in the past: if it conflicts with the reader's convictions about what ought to happen in the future, let him reflect that a high degree of culture in an equalitarian society can only be attained if the great majority of men can be raised to a level, and kept at a level, which has never been remotely approached in the past. If élites are to be formed solely on the basis of *achievement*, then it is our business to enquire how to inculcate the right values of what is worth achieving.[11]

It may be desirable at this point to anticipate an objection which is likely sooner or later to occur to the reader's mind. The history of some great cultures of the past – that of Greece, for instance, or of the Middle Ages – may lead us to the conclusion that the development of culture has its cycle; that the perfection of one stage arises from the decay of a previous stage; that it can do no more than last out its time; that efflorescence and decomposition are inexorably related; and that at no time have all the levels of culture which I would maintain been found to co-exist. The charge has frequently been brought, against writers like myself, of wishing to put the clock back, of craving for a romanticised folk-culture, or an incredible mediaevalism. At least, the censure of this essay must be on a somewhat different ground – that of my wishing to have all at once what can only be had in succession in an historical process, a co-existence of the primitive and the most highly sophisticated. I am by no means insensible to this criticism, any more than I am insensible to the possibility that the highest achievements of a culture may mark the end of that culture; that history goes on, and that men cannot remain settled in any approximation to perfection that they attain – for all our approximations are too imperfect. My reply must be that to think in terms of historical inevitability can, at most, only be one side of our intellectual activity; that if we are to think towards action we must first enquire what things are valuable, whether it is possible to have them all at once or not; and that it is much more worthy of the human spirit to suffer from paradise lost or paradise unattainable than to content itself with its fallen state in ignorance. And the magnitude of the crisis of the world to-day may itself prevent our being hypnotised by the admonitions of history: for we are not now in a position in which old peoples and old cultures are likely to be supplanted by new – we are in a common danger to all races over the whole circumference of the globe.

I do not propose to explore in all the directions to which a consideration of culture naturally leads. It is obvious that there is a bearing on the theory of Education, which might, I hope, provide a corrective to some of our educational assumptions. Unless we have a right notion of what is valuable, of what we mean by success, and of what types of man we admire, our reforms of education may go little farther than a multiplication of sanitary school-buildings and a further proliferation of diplomas. The assumption that clerical labour is more dignified than manual labour, that manual labour in a factory is more dignified than labour on the land, is always liable to creep in unsuspected; as is also the assumption that "culture" is something to be brought down to everyone, instead of something to which a few can be raised. But the only affirmation about education, perhaps, that comes within the scope of this paper, is this: that it is only in a very restricted sense that education produces culture – it is more widely true to say that the culture produces the education: just as the political system of a people must issue from its culture.[12*] Which is not to belittle either educational theory or political theory, but to put them in their organic place.

IV

The question of the relation of culture to religion must now be raised. The question has to be put in two forms: as from the sociologist's point of view, that of the disinterested observer, and from the point of view of the Christian, the relation of culture to the faith which he believes. Even from the former point of view, it is probably a false simplification to take the culture of a people as the fundamental fact, and regard its religion as a special development of that culture. For the religion is the body of beliefs which gives that culture significance, and has also a profound effect upon the form which the culture takes. The influence of culture upon religion, and of religion upon culture, can be observed wherever the same religion has been adopted by peoples of widely different languages, racial stem, and habitat: on the one hand the varieties of cultural background tend to lead to a diversity of cult, and on the other hand a uniformity of belief tends to assimilate these peoples to each other. In the more primitive and self-contained peoples, where the culture and the religion are co-terminous, the distinction between religion and culture can hardly be said to exist. The religious sanction may extend to many activities which in more highly developed societies are quite distinct: in the social-religious pattern of primitive society it is impossible to separate religion from political structure, the administration of justice, the arts, warfare, domestic customs, agricultural regulations, or anything else. Such a condition makes for cohesion (as in the early Jewish world) and for survival of a group surrounded by alien and hostile groups; it may also tend to arrest development. But a characteristic of early society is not necessarily one that it is desirable to outgrow altogether: and the ideal society, so far as we can imagine it, would have much the same unity on a much higher plane. The distinction between the religious and the other aspects of a culture, and the consequent removal of religious sanctions and tabus from a large area of activity, permits scope for enterprise and innovation, certainly for improvement, but it has its disadvantages also. It is not only that the spirit of enquiry, scepticism, and innovation enters into the religious cult also – that is a late stage, and indeed a necessary one – but that the dissolution of the primitive pattern, with the advance of liberty of thought and behaviour, imposes a strain upon human beings greater than the majority can bear. Hence the tendency – dissimulated as a reaction from overt disorder – towards the unification of thought and behaviour, in an artificial pattern, of totalitarian society. We must remember also that the progress of humanity can be conceived in terms of the breaking down of limited cultural patterns and the subsequent formation of larger and more complex ones, while its deterioration can be seen in terms of regression towards smaller and more simplified patterns. At certain stages of transition, the elements in the struggle may be disguised, so that what to the protagonists in a historical situation seemed a religious conflict, may appear to posterity to have been really a struggle of social and economic interest – and vice versa.

These considerations have a bearing on a question which has presented itself, and no doubt will continue to present itself, to the human mind at various times and in various places: the scruple of the devout. Should the human soul aspiring towards salvation, intended by its Creator for the bliss of the beatific vision, concern itself with such an ephemeral pastime as the cultivation of art and letters? The extreme puritanism which leads to the rejection of "images" may aim at an otherworldly goal, or it may be fortified by humanitarian zeal or by the doubt of the right to pleasures which lack of opportunity or native insensibility denies to the majority of fellow-beings. The doubt may lurk in the consciences of many who do not openly confess it; it may be employed to condemn pleasures which a man is incapable of enjoying, and which he therefore conceives to be merely "pleasures of the senses." I do not dispute that the repudiation of these interests may present itself as necessary in a life of peculiar ascetic vocation, as may the repudiation of many other activities lawful and desirable for most individuals: but to repudiate them, not only for oneself, but for the rest of humanity, is a religious perversion which in the long run can only damage the cause it aims to serve. Religious fanaticism may lead to the rejection of temporal government and order, sometimes to the denial of common morality. To deny the arts in the name of religion is to deny the flesh, and partakes of the nature of heresy. Or we may describe it as the assumption that religion can flourish in a soil one of the essential constituents of which has been removed.

But if the arts are an essential element in culture, and if culture is necessary for the development of the highest spiritual capacities of a people, it must not be forgotten that without a religion there can be no culture. Neither the arts, nor political life, nor economic life, nor anything that can be included under the term "civility," can flourish without a total culture, and there is no total culture without a religion – not a multiplication of private figments, but a common faith and order. I would assert further that a religion cannot be fully apprehended until it becomes the faith of peoples of different original cultures, and while uniting these peoples in a common brotherhood, can be contemplated in its transcendence of culture, as well as lived in the conditions of each particular culture. Any mere political, legalistic or economic union of humanity is a frail and temporary substitute for the union in diversity of cultures, which only a common religious faith can create.

Culture eludes definition: a conception of it valid for the whole world would omit all the factors which make it possible in any particular time and place; and a conception of it for any one people or social group would attempt to arrest and fix what is, if vital, moving and fluid. Because of this difference also it is not something for which we can directly plan: it is not an area such that we can make specific recommendations for "culture in a

Christian order." Not that there is nothing whatever to be done about it. What I have tried to convey is something which I think should be at the back of our minds, or rather, which should affect all our value-feelings, in each of the departments of intellectual design. For instance, culture is certainly *not* Education, and to think that we can deliberately produce culture by educating a class, or a selected group, or the whole people for culture, is to expect the cart to draw the horse. But theories of education which ignored culture would be as mistaken as those which aimed to produce it. Theories of politics which ignore it ignore the particular peoples for whose benefit the theories should be designed. As culture refuses to be captured by the museums, or the universities, or the Workers' Educational Association, or the British Council, so on the other hand a recognition of it can make all the difference to our action in every other direction.

I think also that there is something more than a fanciful analogy to be drawn between my view of culture and the view, held by some contributors and vigorously put forward from time to time in the pages of *The New English Weekly*, on the subject of agriculture.[13] I am concerned here with our relation to the spiritual soil, just as that view is concerned with our relation to the material soil: and I venture to think that these two views are, in the end, concerned with the same reality. The greatest achievements of the imagination, religious and artistic, have the firmest roots. And if we can keep our minds clear, on the subject of culture, between the essential and the accidental, the permanent and the transitory, the true and the false – an effort requiring fresh judgments and decisions in constantly changing situations – we shall be both the most wisely conservative and the most radically revolutionary, because we shall be working for those changes which really matter, instead of those which are merely spectacular.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Published serially: part I in the *NEW*, 22 (21 Jan 1943), 117-18; part II, *NEW*, 22 (28 Jan), 129-30; part III, *NEW*, 22 (4 Feb), 136-37; and part IV, *NEW*, 22 (11 Feb), 145-46.

Together with "Cultural Forces in the Human Order" (1945) (6.605) and "The Class and the Élite" (1945) (6.655), this essay represents a stage in the evolution of *NTDC*, which appears in vol 7. Little of the 1943 text, however, would ultimately be incorporated into *NTDC*. As TSE explained to Delmore Schwartz on 10 Nov 1943, "after a year or so I often disagree with what I have said or see what I believe to be a much better way of putting it. For this reason I do not intend to make any further use of these notes myself but hope to approach the whole matter anew at a later time."

TSE completed a version of "Notes towards a Definition of Culture" early in 1942, evidently intending it as a contribution to the book *Prospect for Christendom*. To Fred Clarke, he wrote on 18 Jan, "I have more work still to do on an essay for a volume of Maurice Reckitt's which is overdue"; and to John Hayward, on 2 Feb, "I have been powdering away at my paper on Cultural Values for Reckitt's unwieldy symposium." On 7 Nov, however, he told J. H. Oldham: "I enclose also a copy of my first paper for Reckitt: I have since withdrawn it and written another which I think not only more suitable for his book but better in itself. . . . When you have looked at this (if you care to do so) will you please send it on to [Philip] Mairet, who wanted to see if any parts of it could be put into a form suitable for the *N.E.W.*?" In the end, TSE's "first paper" appeared in the *NEW* as "Notes towards a Definition of Culture," and the essay he substituted, "Cultural Forces in the Human Order," was published in Reckitt's *Prospect for Christendom*.

See also the outline TSE prepared in late 1941 before writing the present essay (6.196).

2. In the preface to *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1869), Arnold famously defines "culture" as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (viii).

3. On TSE's sources for this claim, see note 7 in "Cultural Forces in the Human Order"; on the Dyak (usually "Dayak") practice of headhunting, see note 6 (6.620).

4. The "clash of laws" in Sophocles's *Antigone* arises in the conflict between Creon, king of Thebes, who has ordered that the rebel Polyneices lie unburied, and his niece Antigone, who has defied Creon's edict and buried her brother. Creon defends the rule of law and the authority of the state; Antigone cites "higher" law and maintains her right to disobey an unjust decree.

5. "Eclipse of the Highbrow," *The Times* (25 Mar 1941), 5. For TSE's critique of this article, see his 1942 comment in the *Partisan Review* (6.268).

6. The preservation of English windmills had been an antiquarian concern since the mid-1920s. Interest was sufficiently widespread that by 1934 the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings formed a separate section focusing exclusively on windmills.

7. Regional publishing in such provincial centers as Norwich and Bristol flourished in the eighteenth century. Indeed, for a time, Norwich was second only to London for its concentration of businesses in the book trade. In the early nineteenth century, Edinburgh became a major hub for both book and journal publishing thanks to the activity of Archibald Constable, William Blackwood, and others.

8. The Caribbean islands, or West Indies, were colonized by France, Great Britain, Denmark, Spain, and the Netherlands; the Atlantic slave trade brought millions of Africans into the region; and all these peoples mixed with the native populations.

9*. TSE's note: "'The problem of a sociology of the intelligentsia is, in spite of the fact that much energy has been devoted to it, still in a preliminary stage.' – Mannheim, *Man and Society* (81-82). I am not very happy with the word 'élite,' but it seems to me preferable to the word 'intelligentsia,' which might be preserved to denote intellectual groups in Russia during a particular period of change."

TSE reviewed Mannheim's *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (London: Kegan Paul, 1940) in "Man and Society" (1940) (6.74). The term "intelligentsia" entered the English language from Russia in the late nineteenth century and remains associated to some extent with that country's late Imperial and early Revolutionary eras.

10. Mannheim writes: "If one calls to mind the essential methods of selecting élites, which up to the present have appeared on the historical scene, three principles can be distinguished:

selection on the basis of *blood*, *property*, and *achievement*. Aristocratic society . . . chose its élites primarily on the blood principle" (89).

11. In the aforementioned letter of 7 Nov 1942 to Oldham, TSE explained that he omitted this discussion of elites from "Cultural Forces in the Human Order" in part "because I saw that the question would have to be treated separately and at considerable length, to get past misunderstanding." In 1945, the issue would receive expanded treatment in "The Class and the Élite" (6.655), which would then become the second chapter of *NTDC*.

12*. TSE's note: "It is possible that we are about to lay more burdens upon 'Education' than it will bear. In an article in *The Sociological Review* for July-October 1940 Mr. A. M. Carr-Saunders writes:

> I have said that the responsibility of the universities is heavy. Upon them now rests the training of the élite. It is coming to be recognised that any civilisation which is vital and progressive, depends upon small groups whose influence directs changes in the cultural pattern and determines whether they are for the better or the worse. These groups were once united by blood; later they were bound together by the possession of property; in the society of the future they will emerge by selection. In the selection and training of those who will compose these groups the universities must play a large part. I have used the plural advisedly. It is not a question of producing *an élite*. The health of civilization requires, not so much a class of guardians in whom wisdom reposes, as intellectually and aesthetically adventurous groups. [157]

It would seem that Mr. Carr-Saunders has read *Man and Society*, but without regarding the admonition of Dr. Mannheim which I have quoted above."

The English sociologist Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders (1886-1966) was Director of the London School of Economics. His books include *The Population Problem* (1922), *Professions: Their Organization and Place in Society* (1928), and *The Biological Basis of Human Nature* (1942). TSE quotes his lecture "The Function of Universities in the Modern World," *Sociological Review*, 32 (July-Oct 1940), 137-58.

13. Under the editorship of Philip Mairet – to whom TSE would dedicate *NTDC* – the *NEW* featured agrarian perspectives, including advocacy of what would now be called organic farming.

"A Dream within a Dream": T. S. Eliot on Edgar Allan Poe[1]

The Listener, 29 (25 Feb 1943) 243-44

Although the writings of Edgar Allan Poe are not very extensive, his work is more difficult to sum up in a quarter of an hour than that of some men who wrote a great deal more. He did not live to be old: his life covers the first half of the nineteenth century; his life was very irregular and mostly spent in poverty; and as a literary journalist he wrote a good deal of ephemeral stuff. Even of his small output of verse, about a dozen poems are what support his reputation. Then there are his tales, as he called them, "of the grotesque and arabesque"; a few essays on the art of poetry; and a considerable amount of literary criticism, mostly of American authors of his day who are no longer read. Yet each of his kinds of writing could make the subject of an hour's talk. His stories alone could provide several hours' subject-matter. [They were often hurriedly written, or written under the most unfavourable conditions: some of them are very poor stuff. Yet they not only have, all of them, a characteristic stamp which no other author could have given them, but they are of varied types.] It is enough to say that in one group of these tales he anticipated some of the aims and methods of modern "detective fiction"; in others he foreshadows the modern "scientific romance" such as we find in the early work of Mr. H. G. Wells; in others he provides a link between the tales of supernatural horror of a previous generation and those of more recent times.

There is another aspect of Poe's work which ought to be considered at length, and that is his historical importance. He carries on the romantic tradition, of Byron and Shelley, after it was fading out in England, and transforms some of its elements, and by so doing provides an influence upon the romantic movement of another generation. He spent the whole of his life in America, engaged fitfully in hack-writing for various provincial periodicals; he was in bitter opposition to most of the literary men and movements in his country; he was unpopular and underrated; his life was eccentric, his habits unsocial; he was generally disapproved of. Yet his work was quickly accepted and admired in France and various European countries; his tales were translated into French by the greatest French poet of his age, Charles Baudelaire.[2] [His reputation was made in Europe before it was established in either America or England.] In more recent times his reputation abroad and at home, and probably his influence, have been exceeded by Walt Whitman's; but it is safe to say that no American author has counted for more in European literature than Edgar Poe.[3]

Now influence is not the same thing as greatness. [A man may have an importance for his own age for reasons which are particular to that age; and the mere fact that he has influenced great writers does not in itself make him great. And when that influence is upon men writing in a different language, we may suspect that they may have seen in his work more than was actually there. And] But in the case of Poe it is particularly difficult to estimate his degree of permanent greatness apart from his great influence. To us, a hundred years after his time, a great deal in his writing seems old-fashioned to the point of absurdity; when we are grown up, his horrors no longer terrify and his wonders no longer thrill; and some of his poems seem hardly better than nonsense jingles. Yet there remains something unique, which is the contribution of Poe, which makes the world different from what it would be if we had never read him. [And what makes it more baffling is that we are aware of the presence of something unique, not merely in a selection of his best prose and verse, but in everything he wrote.] There are a dozen poems, and more than a dozen stories, which, if we have once read them, we never forget. He is not a *typical* American writer; he is somehow apart not only from the American literature of his time, but from [the] English literature of his time and that which came after. He is very hard to place. He is a European who knew Europe only in imagination.

I started with the intention of speaking only of Poe's writings, but I found it necessary to say something of his historical position; I wanted to limit myself further to his poems, and have been obliged to mention his prose also. This indicates the impossibility of isolating Poe from his reputation, or his prose from his verse: having said so much, I will pass on to the poems. But I cannot altogether separate his poetry from his prose: because I cannot say what I want to say about his poems without asking you to keep in mind that he wrote three essays on the art of poetry. These are called "The Poetic Principle," "The Rationale of Verse," and "The Philosophy of Composition."[4] These are of considerable importance – whether we agree with them or not – in the history of poetic theory: I mention them now because I think they throw some light upon his own poetic practice.

In the third of these essays, "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe illustrates his theory by a detailed analysis of one of the most famous of his own poems, "The Raven." I do not myself think this one of his very best poems, and I suspect that one of the reasons for its fame is the attention called to it by this very novel and interesting examination of it by the author. When we first read the poem, we are likely to take it as a spontaneous romantic effusion upon which the author had expended very little labour. He invites us to regard it as a very deliberate, calculated construction. Now it is unnecessary to ask whether he really did compose the poem exactly as he asks us to believe he did, or whether he thought of all these explanations of it afterwards. The point is that Poe chooses to appear, not as a man inspired to utter at white-heat, and not as having any ethical or intellectual purpose, but as the *craftsman*. He is concerned with the artistic effect alone. He wrote elsewhere about poetry that "with the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless, incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth."[5] On the other hand, he attached the greatest importance to the *musical* element in poetry. He says: "It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles – the creation of Beauty."[6]

My first point, then, about Poe's poetry, is that it is the work of a man who was not a mere spontaneous lyricist who was occasionally inspired. Although the content of his poems is not intellectual, his attitude towards poetry was highly intellectual. The emotional *material* out of which his poems were made is, indeed, meagre. His poems convey no ethical, philosophical, social or religious message. Nor are they informed by the passions of flesh and blood: no poetry of feeling is farther from sensuality or even sensuousness. He lives in a world of dreams, shadows, and regrets for a lost, unpossessed and unattainable love. His world is immaterial and ghostly, rather than spiritual. There are two poems entitled "To Helen." [, the first of which you will hear read in a few minutes. The second, in blank verse, is not so good: it is a metre in which he was not at his best.] The following lines from one of his poems express his dominant mood:[7†]

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. Only thine eyes remained.
They would not go – they never yet have gone. [78][8]

That is all that remains, in any of Poe's poems: the eyes, the voice, a memory, or a tomb. In the poem addressed to "the angel Israfel, whose heartstrings are a lute" he says:

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
  Is a world of sweets and sours;
  Our flowers are merely – flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
  Is the sunshine of ours. [15][9]

But the Heaven of Israfel is not only inaccessible but unreal; and yet the pleasures of this world are unreal in comparison with the bliss of imagination:

All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream. [73][10]

It will seem puzzling that, with such a narrow range of emotion, such a lack of ordinary human passion and sympathy, the author of so few poems should be more than a minor poet. But, in the first place, his poetry is *original*. That is to say, his vision of life, though limited, was peculiar and coherent and his idiom unmistakable. He takes you into a world different from that of any other poet. And he has the integrity not to attempt to write about anything outside of his own world, or to do anything that any other poet has already done. And in the second place, his poetry is *significant*: it alters the Romantic Movement, and looks forward to a later phase of it. [His conception of the role of the artist leads to the later attitudes represented by such different men as Baudelaire and Flaubert, Walter Pater, and the Pre-Raphaelites, or even Henry James.]

[Of the poems that you will hear, the first, "To Helen," is an early poem, which anticipates his later practice and theory. The second,] His poem "For Annie" has an effect of simplicity, even of artlessness, in its metre and diction, which is peculiar to Poe: it sounds at first so naive that anyone could have written it. Only after you find that it goes on throbbing in your head, do you begin to suspect that perhaps you will never forget it. Another, "Ulalume," shows his power of *incantation*.[11†] The strange names he invents take on meaning, and the repetitions, which at first look like the work of a lazy man who had to fill up a certain number of lines, and could not think of anything to say, have their hypnotic effect.

But there is no easy way of *proving* that Poe was a great poet: the best evidence is that once his poems have become part of your experience, they are never dislodged.[12]

NOTES

1. This radio talk, the second in the series "Landmarks in American Literature," was broadcast over the BBC's Indian Service on 12 Feb 1943. On 24 Jan, TSE sent a draft to Herbert Read, who had solicited it. He wrote again to Read on 30 Jan, specifying the poems he wanted for an "illustrative reading" – "To Helen," "Ulalume," and "For Annie" – and adding, "I will read them if you think best: but 'Ulalume' is rather a jawbreaker." TSE's personal copy of the typescript, with his holograph emendations, is in the Ransom; the *Listener* copy, with editorial deletions and minor emendations, is in the BBC archives, Caversham. The deletions have been restored in brackets; words underlined in the typescript by TSE for emphasis but ignored by his editors have been italicized.

2. Baudelaire's translations of Poe's fiction were published in *Histoires extraordinaires* (1852), *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* (1856), *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym* (1858), and *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* (1865).

3. In "Israfel" (1927), TSE discusses Poe's relation to Byron, Baudelaire, Heine, Whitman, and other poets of the romantic tradition (3.97).

4. "The Poetic Principle" (1850), "The Rationale of Verse" (1848), and "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846).

5. TSE quotes throughout from his personal copy of *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1927). In this passage from "The Poetic Principle," Poe defines poetry as "*The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*" and insists that "Its sole arbiter is Taste" (99).

6. TSE again quotes "The Poetic Principle"; *read:* "the creation of supernal Beauty" (98).

7†. In script: "But the following lines are expressive of his dominant mood:"

8. TSE quotes lines 48-52 from the "To Helen" of 1848 ("I saw thee once – once only – years ago") rather than the better-known "To Helen" of 1831 ("Helen, thy beauty is to me / Like those Nicean barks of yore"); *read*: "*Only thine eyes remained.* / They *would not* go – "

9. "Israfel," lines 40-44.

10. "A Dream within a Dream," lines 10-11; *read*: "*All* that we see or seem"

11†. In script: "The third, 'Ulalume,' shows his power of *incantation*."

TSE discusses the incantatory quality of "Ulalume" in "Note sur Mallarmé et Poe" (1926) (2.846).

12. TSE concluded the broadcast by reading the three poems.

At the end of the printed text, the *Listener* labeled the broadcast "*Overseas*" – a designation often used for American broadcasts – rather than specifying that it was for the Indian Service. On 17 Mar, TSE responded to a compliment from Sgt. Harry Brown: "I am glad that you liked my piece on Poe but I was annoyed with the *Listener*, and have made complaints, for publishing the little bit without explaining that it was written for the Indian Service. Even in such a brief talk, one doesn't say exactly the same things for an Asiatic audience that one would for an English or American." Indeed, he had told George Orwell on 3 Mar that he intended in the future "to stipulate that the *Listener* shall not publish except by consent in each case. . . . One does not frame a foreign or overseas broadcast as one does a talk to English listeners, and it is not reasonable that the *Listener* should have the rights to these."

Education for Culture

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 22 (4 Mar 1943) 176

Sir, – I am afraid that the result of my attempting to put very briefly a suggestion which requires a good deal of elucidation is that I and Mr. K. G. Collier are talking about different things.[1] I need more words than are permissible in a letter, not for defending a point of view (which is a matter of secondary importance) but for making clear what the point of view is and what I mean by "culture." Mr. Collier appears to hold that an "élite" can be constructed by a system for discovering, and subsequently training in boarding schools, those children who, during the first five years of their life, have been so fortunate as to have had a "harmonious relationship" with their mothers. In the first place, I am not convinced that such [a] harmonious relationship is necessary: we have observed cases in which the relationship of children with one parent or the other suffered from being too harmonious. And in the second place, I do not see why the selection of such children, whether by examinations and tests, or by the judgment of schoolmasters or officials of the Board of Education, or by expert psychologists or by enthusiastic amateurs, should produce an élite. For an élite, as I conceive it, is not merely an assemblage of persons of the highest ability: there must be a background of similar values and tastes.[2] This background is naturally provided not merely by their mothers but by their families and the cultural environment of the families. If such a background is to be artificially constructed, the best children must be removed from their families at a very early age and brought up together in whatever environment the experts consider most desirable. This seems to be what Mr. Collier recommends; but I should think that if planning is to surpass Nature, the removal from the families should take place at a much earlier age than 12 or 13, and the subsequent separation from the families should be much more complete: for in boarding schools as at present conducted children are not wholly isolated from domestic influence.[3] I am by no means sure that such a reform would work out for the best.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Kenneth Gerald Collier (1910-98), English educator, was employed during the war as an industrial chemist. In a letter titled "Eliot on Elites" in the *NEW* of 18 Feb 1943, Collier responds to TSE's "Notes towards a Definition of Culture, III." He focuses on TSE's claim that "a high degree of culture in an equalitarian society can only be attained if the great majority of men can be raised to a level, and kept at a level, which has never been remotely approached in the past. If élites are to be formed solely on the basis of *achievement*, then it is our business to enquire how to inculcate the right values of what is worth achieving" (6.350). Asking, "Is the business really as formidable as *that*?" Collier suggests that children of aptitude who have experienced a "favourable domestic environment" in their early years can be selected for cultural training in the existing public school system, "an institution quite capable of fulfilling the function." What matters prior to this training, according to Collier, is not "a high degree of culture in the family" or "the general inculcation of right values throughout the population" but "the harmonious relationship of the mother with the child under 5" (156).

TSE anticipated in 1942 that the passage in question in "Notes towards a Definition of Culture" might be misunderstood (6.356, n.11).

2. TSE would develop this idea in "The Class and the Elite" (6.660-61) in a passage that would eventually enter *NTDC*.

3. Collier had written: "If one or two per cent. of all children of 12 or 13 were selected on the basis of outstanding natural ability, plus exceptional force of personality or exceptional sensibility, and enabled to go to first-class boarding schools they would again be able to establish values appropriate to their development and personality."

Poetical and Prosaic Use of Words

On 11 Nov 1942, TSE accepted an invitation from H. A. Hodges, a fellow member of the Moot, to address the Humanities Club at Reading University. On 24 Jan 1943 he informed Herbert Read that he was about to begin work on both "a talk for the Norwegian Institute on the Social Function of Poetry, and a more ambitious paper for Hodges' literary society at Reading." The lecture, completed by 9 Feb and scheduled for 5 Mar, was postponed till 14 May.

On 31 May, TSE sent the lecture to John Hayward for comment, explaining that he planned "to take this as the basis, or as the starting point, for two lectures to be delivered at Bangor [Wales] next year. My impression . . . is that the possible material is all in the first 12 pages.[1] The rest is unsatisfactory. . . . What I should propose to do, is to go in much more deeply to the question: 'what is meant by *precision* in the use of words in poetry?' with illustrations (Swinburne, as well as Poe, is needing examination); and in the second part make the point about the application of understanding poetry to the perception of illicit emotional appeal in prose."

After receiving Hayward's critique, however, TSE replied on 12 June that he was "ashamed at having allowed you to spend so much time over criticising the details of what is obviously an inferior piece. . . . I am aware, not only that I should have to make a wholly fresh start to make anything of the subject of the paper you have perused, but that my abilities lie rather in the direction of practical wisdom than of abstract thought; and this subject leads, perhaps inevitably, into a maze of semantics, logic and psychology in which I am ill equipped to find my way." The twenty-page typescript (King's, pink carbon) was never revised or published; for his 1944 lectures in Bangor, TSE produced "Johnson as Critic and Poet" (published 1957 in *OPP*).

What I have to say tonight does not belong quite to one or the other of the two usual types of lecture. There is the lecture which aims to impart information, and there is the lecture which attempts to persuade the audience to accept a theory or opinion. The former you hear from the permanent lecturers of the university; the latter, perhaps, is what you expect from a casual visitor. You may find that I have some knowledge, or experience in the use of words for certain purposes: I only regard this as a contribution to the data of the subject. A marksman must acquire a peculiar knowledge of the habits of the birds which he pursues; the ornithologist knowledge of another kind, which cannot be obtained merely by shooting. I am a hunter of words, and have that kind of knowledge of their habits: it is necessary to distinguish this acquaintance with the subject from that of the scholar. I am more anxious that you should say at the end: "he has opened up a field worth exploring" than that you should say: "I believe his view is right."

I am not concerned here with the general difference between Poetry and Prose, and only incidentally with the nature of verse. I started by asking myself whether there was some characteristic way of using words which we found best exemplified in poetry, and another way which we could say was characteristic of prose. If there are, we must expect these uses to be only characteristic, and not exclusive. There is, or there used to be, a pretty clear distinction between prose and verse; there never has been, and never will be, a clear distinction between poetry and prose. We are all familiar with the meaning of the phrases "poetical prose" or "the prose poem," and "prosaic poetry" – though we usually call the latter "prosaic verse" instead. But when we use these terms we are apt to imply that the author was attempting something mistaken, or muddling things up: so the terms do not reveal the fact that in most prose there may be considerable use of words in the poetic way, and the fact that very little poetry has ever been written without using some words in a prosaic way. And the majority of words, in either a poem or a piece of prose, may be simply neutral: there are first of all the particles, prepositions and conjunctions, which have nothing either poetical or prosaic about them.

There are two notions which I must get out of the way first. One is the notion, not so commonly held as it used to be, that some words are "poetical" or prosaic in themselves. A majority of so-called poetical words are hangovers: they were once used in speech and in prose, they have been in their time used by poets, and go on being used by bad poets in belated imitation, or because (like "faery" with an E) they seem to have some magic about them, or because (like "mead" instead of meadow) they fit the metre of a line. The other mistake is that in poetry we are allowed to alter the natural order of words quite arbitrarily. It is true that there is more apparent liberty in poetry: but this liberty is only liberty to follow another law. For instance the line

I am the man who hath affliction seen[2]

is bad verse, because it is obvious that the only reason for putting "affliction" out of place is to preserve the regularity of the verse. That is not a good enough reason: it is the writer's business to find some other word to fit the natural order, or else give up writing. On the other hand, it might seem that Shelley's line

> Swiftly walk over the western wave[3]

was also bad, because a railway guard would not say

> Quickly pass down the corridor, please.

But in this case, Shelley has a perfectly good reason: the inversion gives an entirely different movement to the verse, starting off with a rush and making the music he is after. There is no rule: every case of inversion of the natural prose order of words is a special case, and must justify itself on its own merits. So we may say that there is no specifically poetic order of words.

I have not time to amplify these two points: that there are no exclusively poetic words, and that there is no peculiar poetical construction. We have also recognised that the use of words is largely the same in both; and that we may expect frequently to find that the prosaic use occurs in poetry, and the poetical in prose. We must then look for the two specific aims, of poetry and of prose, such that in any actual writing one must be subordinated to the other. In other words, we must look for the extreme limit of each.

We may begin by saying, that Poetry is primarily concerned with emotion and feeling, and Prose with thought: a very crude distinction which requires a good deal of amplification and qualification. Obviously, any novel may be largely concerned with expressing and analysing the feelings and emotions of its characters; and a psychological treatise may be concerned with them in another way still. And on the other hand, a poem may have a structure of thought which is essential to its full understanding. The difference is not in the subject matter, so much as in the attitude towards it. Consider what is perhaps the most purely philosophical and scientific of all great poems, Lucretius's *On the Nature of Things*.[4] Dante's and Milton's long poems are also philosophical, but mixed with narrative of events happening to human beings and beings conceived similarly. There is no a priori reason why Lucretius should not have worked out his own system of philosophy, and then expressed it in verse. But in practice, that would mean doing two men's work: first, to think out the system solely with the aim of finding abstract truth, and second to examine what it feels like to believe that system. For if Lucretius' poem were nothing more than a statement of that philosophy done into verse, that would be not simply doing something in verse which could be done as well in prose – but something which could be done better in prose. For when we are engaged in mastering the scheme of a system of philosophy, we do not want to be bothered by being conscious of our own or other people's feeling about it. What Lucretius actually does, is to express what it feels like to believe that particular philosophy, and to have a passionate emotion about it. To believe anything, and to believe it to be of great importance, is necessarily to have an emotion about it. Lucretius, therefore, is giving us some very important information about the atomistic philosophy of his time, by telling us what it feels like to believe it. In the course of doing this, he has to give us a good many details about natural phenomena, such as the causes of hail and snow, which, if taken out of the whole poem, do not strike us as very poetical.

We may generalise this case, and say that the study of poetry, especially after we have read enough to see a kind of wholeness, in the poetry of a particular civilisation over several centuries, or in the poetry of several different, but related civilisations at the same time, does give us real information, of a kind different from that of science, about human sensibility – and therefore enables us to understand our own feelings better. The first condition of acquiring this information and understanding which poetry can give, is of course that we should learn with discrimination to enjoy poetry. That is a natural sensibility first, but it has also to be trained; and it does not in itself make the study of poetry different from the study of science. For I suppose that in order to excel in any scientific pursuit, one has to enjoy it; and I imagine that the scientist gets a keen pleasure from following the mental processes of his great predecessors in their progress towards some discovery or invention or in their explanation of it. The difference is that the scientist as such does not need to take any notice of the pleasure he feels, whereas the understanding of the pleasure is the basis of the study of poetry.

To say that poetry is concerned with feeling and emotion is not, then, a definition of its subject matter, but is to say that it may be concerned with any subject matter which has that aspect. To find, therefore, the most nearly antithetical type of prose, we must look for that kind in which the emotional or affective can be most completely disregarded. One expects at first to find this antithesis in scientific writing, but a little examination will show us that the term "scientific prose" is at once too comprehensive and too narrow. We have to remember first the simple fact which we sometimes overlook, that not all writing by scientists is scientific writing; second, that not all sciences are as abstract as they appear; and third, that some other writing fulfils this condition which is not ordinarily regarded as scientific. I have had recourse to the best collection of specimens of every kind of good English prose that I know, *The London Book of English Prose*, a selection made by Herbert Read and Bonamy Dobrée.[5] The following quotation is taken from a passage included by them under the heading "scientific prose," and is admirable for my purpose, though not what the term ordinarily calls to our minds:[6]

> Between Temaju and Semesa, vessels may stand towards the coast into 7 fathoms, and pass on either side of Pulo Baru; avoiding the shoal off the north extreme. Northward of Semesa the channel is clear as far as Tanjong Batu Belat, excepting the two patches of 4¼ and 4½ fathoms, charted; abreast this point the depths decrease suddenly to the shore bank, from 13 fathoms to 8 and 2 fathoms, and must be guarded against; thence it is advisable to pass between Pulo Kabung and the 4¼-fathoms shoal in the fairway. [278]

This is from the *China Sea Pilot*: imbedded in a novel by Joseph Conrad it would acquire a poetic interest by its association with the emotions of the officers of a particular ship in a particular situation: but its purpose is purely prosaic.[7] Here is another passage, from the section "Strategy and Tactics," which is equally appropriate:

> As soon as the crossings over the Nahr el Faliq are cleared of the enemy by the advance of the XXI Corps, the Desert Mounted Corps, passing round the left of the XXI Corps, will be directed on El 'Affule and Beisan with the object of cutting the enemy's railway communications and blocking his retreat in a northerly and north-easterly direction. [374]

Observe that the word "enemy" in such a passage has no emotional charge whatever; also that the fact that this is taken from an order issued in 1918 by General Wavell has an affective interest with which we are not here concerned.[8]

I could certainly find many passages, equally to the point, out of what we ordinarily call scientific writing. But among the several species which Read and Dobrée associate under the genus "scientific prose," many passages do not satisfy my purpose. Here, for instance, is a bit from the judge's summing up of the case of *Gluckstein v. Barnes*:

> These gentlemen set about forming a company to pay them a handsome sum for taking off their hands a property which they had contracted to buy with that end in view. They bring the company into existence by means of the usual machinery. They appoint themselves sole guardians and protectors of this creature of theirs, half-fledged and just struggling into life, bound hand and foot while yet unborn by contracts tending to their private advantage, and so fashioned by its makers that it could only act by their hands and only see through their eyes.[9] [352]

We notice that a fraudulent company is compared to a chicken being hatched – for that is what I take the epithet "half-fledged" to suggest – and are then invited to imagine this chicken as having been bound hand and foot before it has left the egg, and perhaps before the egg has left the hen; this trussed-up chicken could only act by the hands, and see through the eyes, of Mr. Gluckstein and his friends. A mixed metaphor is not conclusive evidence, perhaps, that what we are examining is not "scientific prose." But we were already put on our guard by the word "gentlemen." As the judge becomes very severe with Mr. Gluckstein, we are justified in presuming that the term is not used to define either his social thinking or his personal virtues and accomplishments, but that it conveys, in short, that emotional innuendo which is called irony. This is not emotionless prose. To say this is not to suggest that the judge was prejudicing the case or misdirecting the jury, if there was a jury; nor is it to make fun of Lord Macnaghten's prose style in general; or to deny that some of the finest English prose is to be found among such judicial pronouncements. It is only to say that legal prose is not the extreme limit of the prosaic.

When we examine the typical use of words in passages such as that from the *China Sea Pilot*, or that by General Wavell, we can say more about it than that it is not intended to arouse emotion and that the emotions of both writer and reader are irrelevant. We observe that the word has an exact denotation which is identical for the writer and for every reader; and when we have an extended passage of this type of prose, we observe that the typical word has exactly the same meaning whenever it is used. This is, in fact, characteristic of scientific terminology, the identity and clearness of outline of the thing pointed at. We may assume also, that prose of this type is capable of being translated, without loss or alteration of meaning, into any equally developed language – assuming that the people to whom that language is native, practice the same science, of navigation or warfare or whatever it may be, in the same way. These passages should lose nothing in meaning, by being translated into French or German. When we speak of "scientific prose," I think that we ordinarily mean prose which has this precision.

The point I wish to make may not be so easily accepted. It is that there is another precision, that of poetry, and that some appreciation of both kinds is desirable to help us make our way about this world. We are, of course, accustomed to think of the poet as spending a good deal of time fussing over "the right word," and yet to think of poetry as concerned with material essentially vague. Our notions of "precision," are measured by the precision of the physical sciences – the mathematical formula, the chemical test – and by that of technology – the micrometer and the gauge. I do not pretend that poetry aims at precision of the same kind, or of an analogous kind. The emotion concerned may be of a more or less clearly definable sort: the success of the poem is measured by the uniqueness: that is, if it makes conscious to the reader a feeling peculiar to that poem, either in kind, or by superlative degree. The mood conveyed by Tennyson's "The Lotos Eaters" is not an intense one – lotos eating is not a very passionate activity: but we are not to make exactness of expression relative to the intensity of the emotion expressed. It is not a statement of what the original fabricators and tellers of the myth imagined as the state of mind of people eating a fabulous food, but the use of a classical myth as the setting for a mood realised in the mind of a Cambridge classical scholar of Lincolnshire farming stock who had an unusually fine ear for language.[10]

Let us notice in passing that although the importance of the emotional material (which is not quite the same thing as the literal subject) is essential to the greatness of the poem, it has nothing to do with the genuineness of the poem. There is a beautiful sonnet by the French poet Rimbaud, which has to do only with the experience of walking all day, becoming very tired, and having cold ham and beer at a wayside inn.[11] I should not compare it with the finest sonnets of Shakespeare or Milton, but we want poetry to cover as wide as possible a range of human experience, including cold ham and beer; and every poet who has made poetry of some experience not previously given poetic expression, has made a permanent contribution to our awareness of life. I would also note that the poet is not necessarily limited to his own experience. It seems probable that a man who has had strong emotions, and who has been more conscious than most men of the feelings he has experienced, is thereby better equipped for writing poetry; but he may, or may not, limit himself to his own experience. He may be concerned with emotions he has never himself suffered, but only observed and imagined.

Now the poetical choice of words must be, first of all, determined by two considerations: the meaning of the word and the suggestion of the word; and the suggestion of the word is partly given by its sound, coming in the place where he puts it. For the sound of the word, not by itself but in its context, is part of the means by which the general effect is built up. It may sometimes happen that the word which has the exact meaning you want, has the wrong sound. The perfect word in its place would always satisfy both demands.[12] For instance, in the well-known line of Tennyson

The moan of doves in immemorial elms

the word "immemorial" has perfect felicity.[13] The noise is right, for the scene Tennyson is trying to conjure up, and the meaning is right, for it is "ancient beyond memory or record," and the harmony of sound and sense gives exactly the picture that he wants to evoke. But when Poe, in the poem "Ulalume," says

It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year

he is sacrificing sense to sound.[14] The year in question in the poem is not "beyond memory," or he could not remember it so well. This sacrifice is not so illegitimate as might at first seem, because the sound of a poem, the incantation of it, is an essential part of the means by which the feeling is communicated, and precision of sound is as important as precision of sense.[15] But it is an imperfection, though the poem as a whole is the precise expression of a peculiar, though vague emotion. We cannot admit that a poem which must have recourse to nonsense to convey its meaning is altogether satisfactory. The same objection can be raised by many lines of other first-rate poets, e.g. Swinburne, William Morris, Rossetti, and sometimes Shelley.

Even so far as concerned with the meaning of the word, apart from its sound in relation to that of the other words in the context, poetry may be concerned with much more than is the extreme of prose. I have said that in the latter the word has an exact denotation which is identical for the writer and for every reader, and that it means exactly the same thing wherever it appears. But the subject matter with which poetry deals is not amenable to this kind of precision. Poetry is founded upon conversation, and cannot afford to depart too far from the way people actually talk at the time when it is written. One sometimes has the word which is exactly right, both for sound and meaning, but which cannot be used because it is likely to suggest something irrelevant or absurd to some, if not to all readers. On the other hand, we must distinguish between cognate meanings of a word the awareness of which breaks it up and weakens its force, and those which reinforce it and give it more scope. This reinforcement can be obtained, not merely from the several meanings which a word may have in different contexts for the same generation of readers, but in the various layers of meaning which constitute its history. I find, in trying to write poetry still more than in writing prose, that I constantly refer to the largest English dictionary available: and still more for words, if they are key words, the current use of which I fully understand, than for words of the meaning of which I am not sure; and the reason for using the biggest dictionary, is to study the examples of the meanings of the word, the ways in which it has been used, by English authors since it was first coined. The more of these meanings that can be suggested in one's own use of the word, the better. Of course, the dictionary is not enough, for the biggest can only give a scanty selection of meanings: it cannot include all the uses of that word as a symbol, that is to say, not only the meanings it has had, but the emotions it has aroused.

It would be interesting, were there time, to pursue this examination of the poetic use of words, and fortify it by examples: though I must warn you that you should take anything I say on the subject with a grain of salt. The tempting error is, to affirm as the purposes and methods of all poetry, what really applies only to one's own; and perhaps not even to that, but only to what one would like to believe that it is. But enough for my present concern, is to have proposed that there are two precisions in the use of language, one of which I call "poetical" and the other "prosaic," though I wish to avoid suggesting that the one is exclusively employed in poetry and the other in prose. Most poetry, and most prose, has the need to respect and practice both.

In the greater part of our communication with each other by means of language, what we have to convey is not merely facts but attitudes, including emotional states and implications of value. Even the statement that it is a fine day, though usually, when made, indisputable, would have no meaning (since the person addressed is presumably already aware of the fact) implies [*sic*] the presupposition that both parties prefer a fine day to a foul one, and is an invitation to share the satisfaction that both take in it. The great bulk of written matter, also, is mixed in the same way. The greater part of political writing, even that which is not expressly emotional and persuasive, consists of drawing conclusions from premises which are held from temperamental and circumstantial causes: and we all know how easily the premise "I believe it to be to my interest" is converted into "I am convinced that it is in the national interest." The more important part of historical writing, that of the great historians, is the work of men with a political and social bias of one kind or another, and in reconstructing any personality of the past from the data (itself largely supplied from interested sources) it is impossible not to be affected by the question whether one would have liked or loathed that character. Some of the most satisfactory historians, indeed, are those whose bias is unconcealed: for with them we have no trouble in making our own adjustments; and the first thing to know about any historian, once we have some confidence in his ability to discover the facts and in his honesty, is the political and social views which he maintained in his life.

The mixture of emotion and thought occurs according to a different formula, so to speak, in different degrees and in different ways, according not only to the temperament of the writer but according to the kind of writing. If the poet is a kitten engaged in chasing his own tail, the philosopher is a kitten trying to escape from his tail. His metaphysical construction aims at universal validity, and if we began each with the assumption that our system would be something valid only for people having an identical temperament with our own – in short, only for ourselves – no systems would ever have been built. But in the end, or in historical perspective, the attraction of any particular system is not that of the personality of its builder; I am not sure that the geometrical method of Spinoza, by persuading us when we first read him that here is pure mind with no axe to grind, did not contribute considerably to enabling Spinoza the man to fascinate us when off our guard.[16] Of course, the historical study of philosophy, like the historical study of poetry, enables us to attain a degree of objectivity by freeing us from the domination of any one philosopher; but we are still left with the residue of feeling formed by our own, unknown, personalities. We are, in fact, in any of these studies, engaged in the endless but necessary task of both self-understanding and distinguishing, in any author we read, between the personal, the representative and the universal, between idiosyncrasy and wisdom.

In the social and psychological sciences also, we have to do with an uncertain territory of thought and emotion, and, owing to the degree to which these studies can take on the appearance of exact or natural sciences, an especially obscure territory to find one's way about in. In saying this, I have no design of discrediting these studies. The difficulty inheres in the subject matter, but that need not lead us to ignore it, or to abandon the field to caprice. I only suggest that those subjects demand a kind of sensitivity to language, and awareness of the emotional atmosphere of words, other than what is required of the writer in some sciences. I have recently been reading an interesting book which is described by its publishers as an application of "the psycho-analytical method to the illness of our civilization which expresses itself in an abject submission to dictatorship." In this book I find the following sentence:

> The thesis that men are born equal implies that they all share the same fundamental human qualities, that they share the basic fate of human beings, that they all have the same inalienable claim on freedom and happiness.[17]

We should not be hypercritical of the wording, for I imagine that this is a translation.[18] I take it that the three implications of equality, in this sentence, are meant either to be all the implications, or the essential implications; that "implies" therefore is in effect "means," and that this is a definition of human equality. I suspect that some allowance must be made for the author having escaped from a German environment; for the assertion that all men "share the same fundamental human qualities" seems one that no one but a Nazi would deny.[19] The statement would at least be clearer, however, if we were told what the *fundamental* human qualities are. That all men "share the basic fate of human beings" has been – if we admit the term *basic*, which is no more helpful here than *fundamental* – a theme of poets since early times, and is again something which I should not think anyone would venture to deny – so far, at least, as their life in *this* world goes. The meaning of the third implication, that "they all have the same inalienable claim on freedom and happiness" turns partly on the word *inalienable*. Has a homicidal lunatic – who is literally, in the French speech, *alienated* – the same claim on freedom as a sane man, or has an incurable pickpocket?[20] With this exception (which the author might admit), the sentence seems only to amount, to an English reader, to the statement that human beings become human beings by being born. I cannot attach any significance to it except by assuming that the writer's feeling had been so affected by the Nazi philosophy that he was impelled to deny it to an audience which does not accept it.

I should like to follow out the consequence of the author's next assertion, or primitive proposition that "positive freedom" (which has not been distinguished from negative freedom) "also implies the principle that there is no higher power than this unique individual self" [228]; but I wish to take a few minutes over a book of another kind, Dr. C. H. Waddington's interesting pamphlet *The Scientific Attitude*.[21] This is not a scientific work, and it is not a quasi- or pseudo-scientific work: it is a book by a scientist (who has, we believe, done important work in embryology) about the place of science in society. He defines science as follows: "Science is the organised attempt of mankind to discover how things work as causal systems" [9]. I do not know what work the word "organised" is doing in this sentence, unless it means that science proceeds systematically, and not by fits and starts, or else that it is an activity in which many minds must collaborate. Many years ago I was given to understand that science had dispensed with the notion of causality, and that the recurrence of the same events in the same order, and predictability, was all that it had to do with. The notion of cause and effect was to be left to man in his everyday common activities, where it still serves a purpose. However this may be, it is certainly useful and important for the common good to find out how things work as causal systems; but there is a wide leap between finding out how things work, and deciding how they ought to work, or how we want them to work, and Dr. Waddington never seems to me to come to grips with the problem of what the scientist's values are, how he comes by them, and how, if at all, they differ from the values of those who are not scientific. He says indeed that the words I have quoted are inadequate, and that his idea of science only emerges in the course of his book; and this idea comes to appear as the idea of the sciences in which he is himself proficient, the biological sciences.[22] He says later on, "the important line in politics is between those who judge the value of a society by its efficiency in maintaining itself and by its advance along the whole line of human evolution, and those who judge it by some other criterion, whether based on mysticism, nostalgia for the past, or motives of personal advantage" [95]. Now this sentence is evidently aimed to persuade us, by suggestion and not by reasoning, that all other standards of judgement than those of self-maintenance and advance along the whole line of human evolution, are false and the product either of a weak mind or of a bad character. But as for "efficiency in maintaining itself," we may ask whether the value of a society is merely the length of time that it survives. If so, how much can it change and still remain the same society? And as for advance along the whole line of human evolution, what are our criteria for distinguishing between advance and regression? Is Chinese civilisation one of the highest value, on the ground of its having survived longer than any other, or is it one of the lowest value, in so far as it has remained the same over two thousand years?

It is possible that I may be peculiar in finding anything wrong with the statements of the two authors quoted, and that they will seem to you completely satisfactory. It is also sensible that some may agree with me that there is something unsatisfactory, but put it down simply to faulty or incomplete reasoning. But whether there be any fault in reasoning or not, I find the fault primarily in the use of unexamined words. Neither of these writers seems to me aware how very slippery some words are, or how very unscientific words can be, outside the area of the most exact science.

Now, what do we mean by verbalism, or "mere words"? I think that it consists in the use of words in such a way that they are assumed, by both writer and reader, to have the same exactness of denotation, and freedom from emotional charge, as the words in the *China Sea Pilot*; but which actually mean different things in different contexts, so that the writer and the various readers may unconsciously have different contents at the back of their minds. This is no censure of the words themselves; many words have to be like that, and if we take the trouble to learn how to handle them, they will do useful work. But the ordinary use of such words is such that their force is not in the definable meaning of the word, but in the emotional charge which they happen to have. To attempt to free them from emotion would be ridiculous; if we attempted to live without words which convey, or which stimulate, emotion, [it] would be suicide, for it would mean dispensing with desires and motives for action. The alternative is to be more conscious of the emotional qualities of words. We must not expect, however, that such discipline would solve all difficulties, say in political and social affairs, for us. There must always remain ultimate choices of action: a more conscious use of language would only enable us to distinguish the real choices from the false; what we really want from what we think we want; when the things we want are compatible; whether the thing we think we want most will prevent our having something else we want more. It should make us less suggestible: and we must remember that the effect of suggestion is much less often to make us want something that we did not want, than to make us think we want something which we do not really want. It should help to protect us against the newspapers, the wireless, and everything else that is comprehended under the term propaganda.

I began by trying to persuade you that the first quality of the poet is, not so much to be moved by strong emotion, as to be conscious of the emotions which he observes in himself and in others; and as his business is with speech, to know how much, and what, emotion any word or sequence of words will communicate. It should be, therefore, that the right practice of poetry, and the right study and appreciation of it, ought to be of assistance in the criticism of thought which lies between these abstract poles of the "poetical" and the "prosaic" which I have talked about. (I say abstract, again, as a reminder that neither the greatest poetry nor the best scientific prose can be expected to be composed solely in this kind.) To exercise this critical function, we do not need to be political or social thinkers, or moralists, or anything else specialized; indeed, so far as we are merely amateur specialists we are probably failing to employ our proper qualifications. One might hope, also, that those who are concerned with the emotion and feeling of words, could cooperate with those whose concern is with the exact, unemotional use of words, to criticize continually the verbalism which is the endemic disease of language. I cannot say that I see very much evidence that this happens, or that either poets or scientists, when they turn from their professional activities to those of more general interest, are usually any less irresponsible dupes than anyone else. You will perhaps accept this paper as evidence of the incapacity of the first of these two groups.

NOTES

1. That is, up to the paragraph beginning "It would be interesting, were there time" (6.373).

2. From Donne's "The Lamentations of Jeremy" (1633), line 177; *read*: "I am the man which have affliction seen." The line paraphrases Lamentations 3:1: "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath."

3. "To Night" (1824), line 1.

4. TSE taught Lucretius's *De rerum natura* and the philosophy of Epicurus in Philosophy A, his 1913 Harvard course on Pre-Socratic philosophy (1.775). He discusses Lucretius as a poet expounding the philosophical system of Epicurus in "Dante" (1919) (2.227-28) and in the introduction to his Clark Lectures (2.613-14).

5. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1931.

6. The volume is divided broadly into sections of "Narrative," "Scientific," and "Emotive" prose, each comprising a number of subsections. The Scientific, for example, includes writing not only in the natural sciences but also in philosophy, theology, politics, law, military "strategy and tactics," sports, and criticism.

7. *The China Sea Pilot*, vol 4, ed. C. H. C. Langdon (London: [British] Hydrographic Office, 1912). As its subtitle explains, this volume contains "Directions for the Navigation of the Eastern Shore of the China Sea, between Singapore Strait and the North End of Luzon, Including the Dangerous Ground Outlying It."

8. Archibald Percival Wavell (1883-1950) was promoted to brigadier-general in 1918 and was sent to Palestine, where he played a supporting role in the decisive British defeat of the Turks. The orders quoted here are excerpted from Cyril Falls, *History of the Great War: Military Operations in Egypt and Palestine, Part II: From June 1917 to the End of the War* (1930). In World War II, Wavell commanded the British forces in the Middle East until mid-1941, when he became Commander in Chief of India. He was promoted to Field Marshal in Jan 1943; later in the year he would be appointed Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

9. In this 1900 lawsuit, the defendants founded a company for the purpose of repurchasing a property they had previously acquired privately. They concealed their profit from the sale, and the plaintiffs, who had invested in the now-insolvent company, sued for a refund, which was granted. The opinion quoted here was written by the Anglo-Irish jurist Edward, Lord Macnaghten (1830-1913), who had a reputation for eloquence.

10. Tennyson was born in Somersby, Lincolnshire, and studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. TSE's reference to "farming stock" is not improbable, although the Tennyson family going back for several generations were solidly middle class.

11. "Au Cabaret-Vert" (1870).

12. TSE's language here echoes the last section of *Little Gidding*: "where every word is at home, / Taking its place to support the others" (*CPP* 197; *Poems1* 208).

13. From *The Princess* (1847): "Come down, O maid," line 30.

14. TSE quotes "Ulalume" (1847), lines 4-5, from his personal copy of *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1927), 86.

15. TSE had recently cited "Ulalume" for its "power of *incantation*" in his broadcast "'A Dream within a Dream': T. S. Eliot on Edgar Allan Poe" (6.360). See also his discussion of the incantatory quality of this poem in "Note sur Mallarmé et Poe" (1926) (2.846).

16. In "Spinoza" (1927), TSE's review of *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza*, ed. A. Wolf, TSE comments: "The chief interest of this early biography of Spinoza by a mediocrity who knew him . . . is that it shows that Spinoza had already become at his death a symbolical figure, without being in any way a myth. He was a man of the greatest reticence, but with nothing to conceal; a man of intensely 'private life,' but wholly transparent" (3.57).

17. Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1942), 228. The book had been published the previous year in New York as *Escape from Freedom* (Farrar & Rinehart).

18. Fromm's book was in fact written in English, though it was the English of a native speaker of German.

19. A German-born psychoanalyst and social psychologist, Fromm (1900-80) had indeed emigrated in 1933, settling in New York the following year.

20. The French *aliéné* is comparable in meaning to "mad," or "lunatic," in English.

21. C. H. Waddington, *The Scientific Attitude* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1941). Waddington (1905-75) was an English (Indian-born) biologist.

22. Waddington states: "This definition of science is only a very rough sketch of what the word really means. . . . My idea of science, which other people may disagree with in some points, will only emerge gradually from what I have to say about it in the rest of the book" (9-10).

Christian Belief

To the Editor of *The Times Educational Supplement*

The Times Educational Supplement (6 Mar 1943) 115

Sir, – I observe that in a letter which appears in your issue of February 20, entitled "To End the Dual System" (the system of which the Archbishop of Canterbury said on June 3, 1942, "if we wish to avoid totalitarianism we must realize that there is a merit in the very duality of the dual system"),[1] several eminent persons commit themselves to this assertion: "We hold that the Christian belief common to the Christian Churches heavily outweighs denominational differences."[2]

These words embody a doctrine which is coming to be widely held, a doctrine favoured by all the circumstances of tide, wind, and current, which will carry it to its place among the *idées reçues* of the time.[3] For those who already accept it, this doctrine is probably now beyond examination. Those who do not find it self-evident, but regard it as open to discussion, can form some conclusions as to its probable consequences, from a careful study of the Proposed Scheme for Church Union in South India.[4]

T. S. ELIOT

Shamley Green, Surrey

NOTES

1. Under the heading "Religion in Education," the *Times* reported on 4 June 1942 Archbishop William Temple's speech to the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. Temple opposed the creation of a "national system of religious education" and insisted that the Church "could not agree to anything that constitutes a wholesale transfer or surrender of our Church schools." He added, "In face of what has been happening in Europe the importance of retaining some independence of the non-provided schools must be obvious. If we wish to avoid totalitarianism we must realize that there is a merit in the very duality of the dual system" (7).

2. The letter advocates replacing the existing "dual system" of Church-supported denominational schools and state-supported nondenominational "board schools." The denominational schools should "be acquired by purchase by or for the local education authority, which should thenceforth be responsible for their staffing and maintenance" (92). The letter concedes that general religious education, taught by trained instructors rather

than by ordinary clergy, should be part of the regular curriculum, but it maintains that any denominational instruction should be offered outside school hours on a voluntary basis. Its nine cosignatories included four heads of Oxford colleges, the director of Oxford's Department of Education, and leading faculty.

3. *Idées reçues*: received ideas.

4. On the controversy over the South Indian Church unification scheme, see the introduction to this volume (6.xxxiii-xxxiv).

South Indian Church[1]

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (19 Mar 1943) 5

Sir, – I had not interpreted Lord Quickswood's letter quite as does the Bishop of Barking; and I hope that in this discussion the question of the "sincerity" of any of the parties to the South India scheme – a question which is liable to give rise to sudden and irrelevant heat – will not become an issue.[2] The question of the reality of sea-serpents can be discussed without reference to the sincerity with which some believe, and others disbelieve in their existence.

The Bishop of Barking does, however, introduce a new argument which is extremely plausible, and which must have been present to the minds of the framers of the scheme. It is that views as widely divergent as those embraced by the projected Church of South India are already represented within the Church of England. The question whether the unquestionably "variant views" held by members of the Anglican communion, and recognized in *Doctrine in the Church of England*, are as widely variant as those explicitly admitted by the South India scheme is one which I leave to others to debate.[3] And I only suggest the point that in the South India scheme we are concerned with variations not only of view but of practice. What I wish to ask is, whether there is not a world of difference between accepting a situation which was in existence before any of us were born, with which no one can profess to be wholly satisfied, and the affirmation as a principle that these differences are a matter of indifference? If, for example, those who maintain the doctrine of the apostolic succession deliberately unite themselves with those who consider the episcopate merely a "form of government," then they are pledging themselves to the assertion that a doctrine is at the same time essential and inessential: which is, I submit, a great strain upon the mind.[4]

Yours, etc.
T. S. ELIOT

Shamley Green, Surrey

NOTES

[1] TSE dates this letter 17 Mar. On the controversy over the South Indian Church unification scheme, see the introduction to this volume (6.xxxiii-xxxiv).

2. The politician and educator Hugh Richard Heathcote Gascoyne-Cecil, 1st Baron Quickswood (1869-1956), was from 1936 to 1944 Provost of Eton College. He was staunchly conservative in both politics and religion. TSE refers to Quickswood's letter in the *Times* of 15 Mar 1943, which criticizes the Church unification scheme because it fails to uphold the truth of the Creeds and Sacraments "in the sense that the Church of England receives and teaches them" (5).

James Theodore Inskip (1868-1949) was Bishop of Barking from 1919 to 1948. He came from an evangelical Anglican family, and his younger half-brother Thomas Inskip, a prominent politician, was instrumental in twice defeating (in 1927 and 1928) the proposal for a revised *Book of Common Prayer* whose most important sponsor was Quickswood. The bishop's letter appeared in the *Times* of 17 Mar 1943 and began by asking whether Quickswood "has any ground for questioning the sincerity of some of the parties . . . with regard to their acceptance of the Creeds and Sacraments?" It goes on to point out that members of the Church of England "take widely variant views on the subject, but that does not affect their membership in one communion" (5).

3. *Doctrine in the Church of England: The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922* (London: S.P.C.K., 1938). The Commission on Christian Doctrine was formed in response to concerns over growing divisions in the Anglican communion, such as questions of Christology – the Person of Christ, the role of the Incarnation, the fact of the Resurrection – and the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. Its report, published after sixteen years of meetings and discussion, reflected the diversity of opinion on the Commission and within the Church itself; it found any mitigation of differences on points of doctrine largely unachievable and undesirable: "[T]here is not, and the majority of us do not desire that there should be, a system of distinctively Anglican Theology. The Anglican Churches have received and hold the faith of Catholic Christendom, but they have exhibited a rich variety in methods both of approach and of interpretation" (25).

4. Apostolic succession: "the continued transmission of the ministerial commission, through an unbroken line of bishops from the Apostles onwards" (OED). That spiritual authority is thus vested in the episcopate (i.e., the bishops) is a crucial Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic teaching; other Anglicans accord it less significance or reject it entirely, as do other Protestant sects. The proposed scheme for the Church of South India noted the diversity of perspectives on this issue: "some regard episcopacy merely as a form of church government which has persisted in the Church through the centuries. . . . Others believe that episcopacy is of divine appointment, and that episcopal ordination is an essential guarantee of the sacraments of the Church." The united Church remained uncommitted "to any particular interpretation of episcopacy" (*Scheme* 9-10).

South Indian Church[1]

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (25 Mar 1943) 5

Sir, – Bishop Western offers, in correction of my interpretation of "the episcopal principle" in the South Indian scheme, the statement that "the affirmation involved is that no one particular interpretation of episcopacy . . . is essential to the Church."[2] This interpretation of the affirmation seems to me to say just what I said myself, unless there is a subtler distinction here between matters which are inessential, and matters which are indifferent, than I have been able to grasp. The important difference lies in the distinction which I tried to draw, between recognizing a situation which exists within the Church of England, and affirming a principle in a new Church to be formed. This distinction is obscured by Bishop Western's use of the word "union" in his next sentence.[3]

I should like to add that I chose the "episcopal principle" as an illustration. There are other questions involved, such as that of the validity of orders, which, in so far as any of them can be considered apart from the rest, are equally vital.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

Shamley Green, Surrey

NOTES

1. TSE dates this letter 22 Mar.

2. Frederick James Western (1880-1951) was from 1929 to 1938 Bishop of Tinnevelly, India, and, from 1940, general secretary to the Cambridge Mission to Delhi. In the *Times* of 22 Mar he responded to TSE's letter of 19 Mar (6.383). He had recently taken part in a similar debate over the South Indian scheme in the *Church Times*, where he attacked an oppositional editorial.

3. Western's letter concluded: "It is, of course, the case that those who hold that agreement on such a point [apostolic succession] is a necessary condition of union in one Church cannot approve the scheme. Does the Church of England hold this?"

Draft of a leaflet advertising the Virgil Society

On 1 Jan 1943 TSE wrote to George Orwell that he was annoyed with himself "at having accepted another invitation, from somebody starting a society for boosting Virgil." The invitation came from the Rev. Bruno Scott James (1906-84), founder of the Virgil Society, who called a mid-Jan organizational meeting that included TSE; historian Douglas Woodruff (1897-1978), editor of *The Tablet*; Robert Speaight; and Miss E. C. Gedge of Westfield College, University of London. TSE was assigned the task of writing an advertisement leaflet for distribution to potential members, with input from Woodruff. On 10 Apr, with no response from Woodruff after repeated reminders, TSE sent the following draft to James, writing: "Solely in response to your goading I send you the enclosed notes. . . . I did not know quite what note to strike, or at what length to strike it. I didn't want to say anything about what the Society is going to do, because we don't know; I wanted to attract the right people and not the wrong; and I did not want to allow room for any suspicion that the Society had any ulterior axe to grind, yet wished to indicate that it has a function. All this is very difficult, and what I have said may not be suitable at all." On 21 Apr TSE wrote to James, "I am glad that you like my draft but I also find on my return a draft from Douglas Woodruff which is in some respects better than mine as it is more straightforward in suggesting points which were intentionally left implicit in mine. It might be better if I studied this and tried to incorporate the best features of both." TSE then collaborated with Woodruff on a jointly authored text (6.814), which was published with a letter from the Society in the *TLS* of 18 Dec 1943 (6.812). The governing Council elected TSE the Society's first president for 1943-44.

It is not unusual for announcements of the foundation of a new society to begin with the words "why another society?" and then proceed to answer their own question. But this announcement is addressed to those, whoever they may be, and whatever their other vocations and beliefs, who love the poetry of Virgil; and we do not believe that lovers of Virgil need any persuasion to join a society designed to foster the devotion to that poet. The common bond already exists, though the persons united by it are largely unknown to each other.

The Virgil Society is initiated under the auspices of the Classical Association;[1] but a society founded to honour a particular poet has not the same tasks as one concerned with the whole of a language, a literature and a civilisation. Scholarship, for instance, is not a necessary qualification: among our members there will be many who keep up their communication with the poet with the aid of a translation. Indeed, those who are born

Virgilians, and who recognise themselves as such, even though they have never enjoyed the full experience of the great music of the Latin verse, are equally welcome.

To the rest of the world, this will be merely another society like many already in existence, which bring together the admirers of some one poet, ancient or modern. But to the true Virgilian – to whom these words are addressed – however much he loves other poetry, and even if he concedes a higher place, in one respect or another, to some other poet – the foundation of a Virgil Society will have a special significance. For the Virgilian, Virgil is not only one of the world's greatest poets, but a symbol. His peculiar genius, and the circumstances of his time, place and language, make him the representative European poet as no other is. He also belongs to every European literature in its own tradition; he also belongs to each one of us with the particularity of a person and an event in our own private life. What he symbolises, therefore, cannot be reduced to a literary, or political, or social creed or programme; his significance is all the greater for not being quite the same for any two of his disciples. No two poets exhibit his influence in quite the same way; no two critics – for example Sainte-Beuve and Theodor Haecker – give quite the same interpretation of his meaning.[2] To the Virgilian, for these reasons, Virgil has a relevance to the present time which escapes definition.

NOTES

1. In his letter of 21 Apr to James, who had made the correction, TSE replied: "Certainly let us delete the reference to the Classical Association. I was under the misapprehension in thinking that the Association as such had committed itself to approving of the Society." Before the end of the year, the Society had received the recognition of the Classical Association and of the Societies for the Promotion of Hellenic and Roman Studies.

2. Sainte-Beuve discusses Virgil in *Étude sur Virgile* (1857), Haecker in *Virgil: Father of the West*, trans. A. W. Wheen (1934).

John Dryden's Tragedies[1]

The Listener, 29 (22 Apr 1943) 486-87

Most of us, whether English or not, have made our first acquaintance with English poetic tragedy through Shakespeare. Then we have read some of the best plays by other poets of Shakespeare's time, Marlowe, Jonson, Chapman, Webster and others. Even the best plays by these poets are seldom seen on the stage; and Shakespeare is the only dramatist some of whose plays have been produced almost continuously since they were written. But even the less-known plays of his contemporaries give pleasure in reading: they have moving scenes in them, and passages of great poetry. When we pass from the last plays in that tradition, written in the earlier years of Charles I, there is a span of years when the theatres were closed; and when a new generation of dramatists appears after the return of Charles II we find ourselves in a very different world.[2] Of this new age of Charles II and James II, John Dryden is without doubt the greatest poet. He was also the most distinguished dramatist, not in comedy, but certainly in tragic verse. The tragedies of the greatest poet of his age ought to be worth reading. But in trying to appreciate the plays of Dryden we all, at the beginning, experience great difficulty. We can see that they are the work of a man with a great gift of language, but this gift seems at first essentially prosaic, and essentially undramatic. We have come to see that Dryden is not to be compared with his predecessors, because he is trying to do something different. I want to take up briefly the chief obstacles which prevent us at first from enjoying his plays. These are: the versification and language; second, the way he deals with character and emotion; third, the type of plot.

Dryden's earlier tragedies, or "heroic dramas," are written in rhyming couplets; in the later plays he returns to blank verse. Of the first, of which *The Indian Emperor* is the earliest, the best in my opinion are *The Conquest of Granada* and *Aureng-Zebe*. Of the second, those in blank verse, the most famous is *All for Love*, a play so closely following the plot of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* that it might pass for a re-writing of that play.[3] Now, rhymed couplets were always used in the French poetic drama of the seventeenth century. There are special reasons, in the nature of the French language, which make rhyme desirable; but rhyming verse never has established itself on the English stage, and I think never will. Blank verse is our natural form. The special reasons which justified Dryden and some of his contemporaries for using rhyme are three. First, the possibilities of blank verse had been temporarily exhausted. Second, English literature, and especially the drama, needed the new stimulus, which it got from French example. And third, the rhymed couplet was the form of verse most congenial to Dryden himself. The fact that he later abandoned it for the stage indicates that its possibilities were limited. Nevertheless, I think that his rhyming plays are more interesting, because more characteristic, than his blank verse plays. When he wrote the latter, he was challenging comparison not with Shakespeare but with some of the followers of Shakespeare, such as Philip Massinger, who could use that kind of verse just as well. When he used rhyme, he was doing something that nobody else could do or has ever done so well in English. It was not worth while for anyone else to try; but Dryden did something unique.

Now, to enjoy rhymed verse in an English play, we must expect some dramatic virtues and not others. We cannot just say that the form is *artificial*. We can say, in general, that rhymed verse is much less like real human beings talking, than blank verse is in the hands of a master. But *Dryden's* rhymed verse is more natural, more like conversation, than *Dryden's* blank verse. It was more natural to Dryden, and it is more like Dryden talking. In a play by Shakespeare, or in the greatest plays of his contemporaries, we lose ourselves in the character: it is the character on the stage whom we hear speaking. In the plays of Dryden, it is always Dryden whom we hear speaking, through that character. And so, as we should expect, his plays are at their best either in long and magnificent speeches, in which we admire the way he says things, or in short debates between two characters. In the latter, each character puts his side of a case, so that you are fascinated [, as in a play by Bernard Shaw,] by the brilliance of the repartee without bothering much who is saying what. [The effect is of something well sustained on a very high level: but Dryden does not range, like Shakespeare, either to the height of the sublime or to homely simplicity.]

The verse form fits in well with what the play is aiming to express. Dryden, like the French tragic dramatists, is concerned rather with the expression of *emotion* than with that of *character*. The difference is that Corneille and Racine, in expressing an emotion perfectly, project a character, and Dryden does not. His men and women are merely mouthpieces. Second, Dryden is not concerned with the psychological penetration into emotion, for that means understanding a particular individual experiencing that emotion; he is concerned rather with two emotions in conflict, sometimes in one person, sometimes between two people. In *The Indian Emperor* the two sides of the conflict are Love and Honour – the conflict which turns up again and again in the French dramatists. The aim of this kind of drama is not to express the emotion, or conflict of emotions, in the way in which that person would feel it, so much as it is to give a perfect literary expression of the emotion, and put it into the mouth of a character. For this purpose, the best sort of plot is one remote from actual life, and even remote from real history. *The Indian Emperor* is based on the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. When Shakespeare, or one of his contemporaries, wrote an historical play, he kept pretty closely to the best historical records accessible; for what a large part of the audience wanted and expected was history. But the audiences which saw *The Indian Emperor* and *Aureng-Zebe* expected nothing of the sort. The Spaniards and the Mexicans in *The Indian Emperor* talk in the same way and experience the same emotions. Love is a noble emotion to which everything should be sacrificed except honour. So the struggle between love and ambition, and love and duty, or love and a rash promise, is the same for all of them. And the plot consists simply of the varying fortunes of war and intrigue, all invented by the poet, in order to play every possible variation upon a limited number of simple emotional situations.

Now, I said a few minutes ago, that I think that Dryden's rhymed plays [, of which you are going to hear a specimen,] are more interesting than his blank verse plays. I did not say that they are greater; indeed I agree with most critics in considering *All for Love* his greatest play. But the blank verse plays can justly be compared with Shakespeare and the playwrights who immediately followed Shakespeare; while there is nothing in English which can compare with the rhymed plays. And the rhyme has the advantage of reminding us that Dryden was trying to do something different from any previous English dramatic writer of equal power. Character need not be the centre of interest in a play. In some of Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays, for instance, the characters are only made sufficiently distinct to be the appropriate mouthpieces for the things that Mr. Shaw wants to say; and in a good deal of his most brilliant dialogue, in which the character has to say just what you least expect him to say, it seems to matter very little which character has which half of the dialogue. We do not think any the less of the plays for that, for the chief law of the drama is to keep the audience interested. If we were seeing a play of Dryden performed, we should not demand to be able to forget the actor in the part; on the contrary, we should want to remember that they were actors, and take our enjoyment from the excellence of their declamation of their speeches, and from the choice of language, and smoothness of versification, on the part of the author.

There is one other thing to remember about Dryden. He was not primarily a dramatist. We do not feel, that is, that he *needed* the drama, as Shakespeare did, for the full realisation of his genius. He expressed what he had to say still better in his long poems and in his lyrical poems. He wrote plays during twenty years. But plays are only one part of his work; his satirical and didactic poems, his songs, and the prose of his literary criticism, have left a deeper mark on English language and literature. None of his poetry is of the very greatest kind; but in every kind that he practised, he is supreme. And this is true also of the drama that he wrote.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. This radio talk, composed 20-21 Mar 1943, was broadcast 1 Apr over the BBC's Eastern Service as part of a series on "Great Dramatists" for the program *Calling All Students*. Extracts from Dryden's play *The Indian Emperor* were recited as the broadcast began, followed by TSE's opening remarks, not included in the *Listener*: "The lines which you have just heard come from John Dryden's first successful heroic play, *The Indian Emperor*, which was presented on the stage in 1665. Even from a few lines, you will perceive that we have to do with something very different from the drama of the age of Shakespeare."

The editorial copy of the script, with deletions and minor emendations by the *Listener*, is in the Ransom. The deleted phrases and sentences are restored in brackets; words underlined in the typescript by TSE for emphasis but ignored by his editors have been italicized.

2. The London theaters were closed in 1642 by the Puritan Parliament and remained closed throughout the Commonwealth period. They were reopened in 1660, shortly after the restoration of the monarchy.

3. Dryden, *The Indian Emperor* (1665); *The Conquest of Granada* (1670); *Aureng-Zebe* (1676); *All for Love* (1678).

Planning and Religion[1]

A review of *The Judgement of the Nations*, by Christopher Dawson

London: Sheed and Ward, 1943. Pp. 154.

Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist, by Karl Mannheim

London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1943. Pp. xi + 180.

Theology, 46 (May 1943) 102-06

To review together Mr. Christopher Dawson's *The Judgement of the Nations* and Dr. Karl Mannheim's *Diagnosis of Our Time* would be unjustifiable were it possible to do justice to either in less than an essay of the old quarterly size. For to discuss either at all adequately would be to discuss also, not necessarily the whole of each author's past work but the development of certain dominant ideas throughout that work. Otherwise, one is obliged to assume an acquaintance with Dr. Mannheim's previous book, *Man and Society*, and with at least two earlier books by Mr. Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* and *Beyond Politics*.[2] Some of Dr. Mannheim's ideas have, I suspect, obtained currency among persons who either have not read *Man and Society* or have not wholly digested that massive and difficult work; I wish that there was more evidence that Mr. Dawson's two books, which contain some of the wisest and most penetrating criticism that has been made of contemporary politics, culture and religion, had been read at all. The two books under review occupy a somewhat similar position in their authors' works. They consist of closely related essays, written at various times during the war; some of Mr. Dawson's have appeared, in the same or an earlier form, in *The Dublin Review*; Dr. Mannheim's – which he subtitles "wartime essays of a sociologist" – were composed primarily for discussion in private groups. Both volumes were evidently constructed, as all work of profound and conscientious thinking at the present time must be, under considerable difficulty; they are certainly as important as any books on social problems which have appeared during these last three years.

Neither considerations of space nor the foregoing parallel, however, is sufficient to justify considering the books together. But if we find a point upon which they converge, and consider the differences and similarities in their approach, the result – when we have to do with two writers both of great distinction, engaged in different special studies and possessing different backgrounds – may be of some profit. As the questions with which they are concerned are closely related, and the authors are quite aware of each other's work, the point of convergence is not difficult to find. Mr. Dawson says: "Is it possible to develop a planned culture which will be free? Or does cultural planning necessarily involve a totalitarian state? . . . This is the question that Dr. Mannheim deals with in the final chapters of his book, *Man and Society*" (81). He proceeds, in the next page or two, to discuss Mannheim's solution, and finds two difficulties:

> First, that a social science such as he desiderates hardly exists as yet, though we can see its beginnings.
>
> Secondly, that the remoulding of human nature is a task that far transcends politics, and that if the State is entrusted with this task it will inevitably destroy human freedom in a more fundamental way than even the totalitarian states have yet attempted to do.
>
> Those states do, however, show us the risks of a wholesale planning which sacrifices the liberties and spiritual values of the older type of culture for the sake of power and immediate success. The planning of culture cannot be taken in a dictatorial spirit, like a rearmament plan. Since it is a much higher and more difficult task than any economic organization, it demands greater resources of powers of knowledge and understanding. It must, in fact, be undertaken in a really religious spirit. [83]

Dr. Mannheim would not, I think, disagree with this affirmation; but his statement of it would be very different. It would be much less simple; that is partly because he is a sociologist, with no dogmatic religious faith such as Mr. Dawson's, and partly because he is Mannheim.

Sociology is already a recognized science with an immense body of literature and a formidable, though brief, tradition; it is (as Dr. Mannheim says) the science of Human Behaviour, synthesizing and comprehending such more restricted sciences of human behaviour as economics and psychology. Already we need another science, the science of the Behaviour of Sociologists. I mean that the moment the sociologist ceases to confine himself to description within his own terms, and to offering dispassionate predictions of the results of two or more alternative procedures, the moment he betrays any emotional interest in what has happened or in what will happen, elements too personal to be part of the "science" come into play: they appear to us, when we disagree, as *prejudice*, and when we agree, as *wisdom*. I think that Dr. Mannheim has a generous share of wisdom, and he would be a singular human being if he had no prejudices; and, besides being a sociologist, he has unusual intuition in matters of art and religion. And furthermore (as one would expect) he has a very complex and fascinating personality, which is by no means unapparent even in the scientific rigours. Not the least of the ardours demanded of his reader is the continuous alertness necessary to decide which side of him is, at the moment, uppermost. There is first of all, of course, the sociologist.

> Child psychology, educational psychology, criminology, experimental psychology, psycho-analysis collected a whole store of material which was ready to be co-ordinated and integrated into a Science of Human Behaviour. [57]

There is a more passionate voice, which speaks sometimes almost in the accents of *The New Statesman*:[3]

> All of us know that the greatest oppression in history is not that of the slaves, serfs or wage-earning labourers, but that of women in patriarchal society. [34]

There is a third voice, which would not be heard in *The New Statesman* at all, and which says:

> There will, therefore, in every planned society, be a body somehow similar to the priests, whose task it will be to watch that certain basic standards are established and maintained. . . .
>
> It will become more and more a question whether something corresponding to the monastic seclusion, some form of complete or temporary withdrawal from the affairs of the world, will not be one of the great remedies for the dehumanizing effect of a civilization of busybodies. If this is so, this monastic seclusion will once more have two functions. The first will be to provide an opportunity for those who, so to speak, specialize in religious experience, and whose one task is to transmit the spirit once revealed to later generations without themselves making the adjustments to the new surroundings. These will be the guardians of

> the spirit, to whom the purity of the deeper experience is more important than its contemporaneity. But there will be, secondly, more secular "orders" into which the active politician and business man can withdraw for a while for contemplation, and so make contact with those who are less involved in the struggle for existence. [119, 126]

This is more like Mr. Gerald Heard, but more Christian as well as more human, than the programme presented in *Man the Master*.[4]

The paper from which these last two quotations are taken, "Towards a New Social Philosophy," is of peculiar importance for Christian readers, being subtitled "A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist." Dr. Mannheim believes, I think, that the religious element (I am trying to speak his language, not mine) is necessary. For on the one hand "a planned society cannot be built on the neutralized attitudes of the late Liberal age, in which all the values tended to cancel each other out" [109]. On the other hand, a planned society which ignores religious values will end in some form of totalitarianism (in this country, probably in what Mr. Dawson calls a "totalitarian democracy"). The planning must be done, therefore, with a view to leaving open the place which only a religious reawakening can fill: only "the conditions under which these deeper experiences will flourish can be planned" [123]. It will be noted that Dr. Mannheim, as a sociologist, is concerned with religion only as "religious experience" – with religion as a feeling experienced by individual human beings; and we may ask, in passing, whether such a description from outside can ever be quite satisfactory, since a necessary condition of that feeling is a belief that certain statements about the universe, about Man and God, are *true*, and a religious "experience" without dogma is very different from the experience of believing a dogma. But I find a difficulty in the assertion that the *conditions* for a religious revival (leaving the revival itself to the Spirit) can be planned. If we build a house, and await the appearance of an interior decorator of genius before covering the walls and floors and purchasing furniture, we know that certain things about that house are settled: we do not expect the decorator to take it to pieces and reconstruct it according to another plan, in the course of carrying out his beautification. But if we plan a society, leaving space for religion to fill when it turns up, how do we know that the form in which it may arrive will fit the place that we have left for it? Dr. Mannheim himself may be quite prepared to accept the most drastic alterations, but perhaps it will be too late? Will for instance, the "body somewhat similar to the priests," which we learned of in my last quotation, be any more prepared to make room for genuine priests than Pharaoh's experts were to make room for Moses and Aaron?[5] Unless the religious inspiration is already present, in designing the general plan, I doubt whether it is likely to find a warm welcome later.

This difficulty also comes to light in Dr. Mannheim's use of the word *basic*. He tells us that "the Christian does not merely want to adjust himself to an environment, but wants to do so only through patterns of action which are in harmony with his basic experience of life. . . . Christian action has its direction, since it is possessed with a basic vision of life, and although this has to be reinterpreted it does not wither away" [142]. But he had previously said:

> To put it quite briefly, we must establish a set of basic virtues such as decency, mutual help, honesty and social justice, which can be brought home through education and social influence, whereas the higher forms of thought, art, literature, etc., remain as free as they were in the philosophy of Liberalism. It must be one of our main concerns to establish the list of those primary virtues without which no civilization can exist, and which make for the basic conformity which gives stability and soundness to social life. [110]

The question is, Which is the more basic – the Christian vision of life or the primary virtues of social survival? This seems to bring us bang to the question of natural law, upon which I am too prudent here to venture; but we may ask whether it is possible to determine, establish and maintain these social virtues, unless there is some kind of religious vision of life about the place.

I am also troubled by the emphasis on *novelty* in Dr. Mannheim's vision of religious revival. He says truly of the "New Spirit" that "We cannot create it. Only if it is already at work can we strengthen those tendencies in it which we desire to prevail" [163] – and only if it is already at work, we may add, is there much hope that it and our planned society can unite successfully. But he has said earlier:

> After all, a Cathedral Mass is also a spiritualized collective ecstatic experience. The problem, therefore, is rather to find *new forms of spiritualization* [italics mine] than completely to deny the potentialities inherent in the new forms of group existence. [161]

I hope I am wrong in interpreting these remarks as assuming that the Cathedral Mass is no longer capable of satisfying the human need for collective ecstasy. But much earlier he has said:

> If one takes the attitude that the truth of Christianity is laid down in certain clear-cut statements which have supra-temporal validity, there will be small scope for sociological thinking. . . . If in contrast to this one holds the view that the fundamental Christian attitudes have not been laid down in terms of rigid rules, but have rather been given in concrete paradigmata which only point in the direction where Right is to be sought, then there is scope left for creative contribution in every new epoch. [117]

It seems odd that Dr. Mannheim, who in the same essay has criticized Modernism with penetration, should commit himself to this statement. In this passage, we observe that one alternative is an *attitude* and the other a *view*; that the first is concerned with the *truth* of Christianity, while the word *attitude* is called upon to do fresh duty in the second. The first, moreover, seems to point to the Creeds ("clear-cut statements"), but the second substitutes for the "clear-cut statements" "rigid rules" – which are not the same thing. I am, therefore, not convinced that the religion, the place for which his planners are to be planning, is likely to be Christianity; any more than I am convinced that they will be able to plan the place for it unless they already believe it, or are inspired by the Holy Ghost to act as if they did. It is, as Mr. Dawson says, "easy for a planned society to incorporate the least vital elements of organized Christianity at its lowest level of spiritual vitality" [129].

I am not (I must explain) anxious to find flaws or ambiguities in Dr. Mannheim's argument, and not at all to depreciate an impressive and important work. It is rather that I feel sure that this work is going to have a considerable influence and am by no means confident that the results of this influence will even be such as Dr. Mannheim himself would approve.[6] It is a very complex work, demanding close study; and with such a work people find it easier to accept whatever fits, or appears to fit, with the furniture already in their minds, than to understand a whole which will contain much that is unfamiliar and much that imposes re-examination of the opinions they already hold. I regard it as unfortunate, for example, that we shall have the need, the opportunity, and the enthusiasm for a great deal of rebuilding and town planning, at a period in which there exists no great architectural style in which to build; similarly, as a consideration at least recommending caution, that we should have the need, the opportunity, and the enthusiasm for extensive social replanning at a time when values are so confused, and when popular approval is so easily obtained for both the untried and the discredited, for both the callow and the jejune.

I must remind the reader again that each of these volumes is a collection of essays, and that each contains so much thought of immediate value that a dozen reviews of this length would not exhaust the matter of discussion.[7]

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London

NOTES

1. On 9 Mar 1943, TSE told John Hayward that he had written this review while suffering from "the current ailment of the respiratory organs which passes under the comprehensive name of flu."

2. Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940), which TSE reviewed (6.74); Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* (1935), and *Beyond Politics* (1939).

3. Associated at its 1913 founding with Fabian socialism, *The New Statesman* engaged in strong leftist social and political critique under Kingsley Martin's editorship (1931-60).

4. Gerald Heard, *Man the Master* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941; London: Faber & Faber, 1942). The book offers a psychosocial analysis of "the present crisis" (7) and recommends an "evolution in [spiritual] consciousness" as the alternative to social "dissolution" (14). On Heard's "voice," see TSE's untitled essay in *Revelation* (1937), which finds Heard's "turgid style" and "incredible" views reminiscent of Bertrand Russell's *A Free Man's Worship* (5.475). However, TSE told I. A. Richards in a letter of 7 Dec 1942, "I am distinctly impressed by Gerald Heard's last book *Man the Master*: the more so because of previous prejudice against him." And to Melville Chaning-Pearce on 23 Dec, TSE described *Man the Master* as "a book which within its limitations has a great value and I think it is likely to be overlooked by Christian periodicals because of its alien mysticism and ridiculed by modern minds of the type which edit the *New Statesman*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and *The Times Educational Supplement*."

In the longer of the two paragraphs under discussion, Mannheim is not expressing his own view, as TSE implies, but summarizing one of several competing views on "the essence of religion" (125).

5. In Exodus 7-8, the Pharaoh's magicians attempt to duplicate the miracles wrought by God through Moses and Aaron in an effort to demonstrate that these phenomena are not extraordinary. Only after they fail to replicate the third of the ten plagues – the plague of lice – are they compelled to acknowledge that "the finger of God" is at work (8:19).

6. This concern was apparently the nub of TSE's apprehensions about Mannheim's book. To J. H. Oldham, he had written on 11 Feb: "As you know, I am very doubtful of the effect which Mannheim's thinking is likely to have and am not sure that that effect will be altogether what Mannheim desires."

7. As he explained to Herbert Read on 3 Apr, TSE considered this review a particularly cautious one: "I am glad to have some reassurance about my review, because I wanted to make it as 'velvet' as possible. But I can't be happy about it. On the one hand it seems a duty for a detached critic to warn people against swallowing their Mannheim whole; and on the other I feel a peculiar unwillingness to wound Mannheim." TSE's treatment of Dawson is apparently "velvet" as well, for, as he told John Hayward on 2 Apr, "Dawson's book is not very good, the point of the point is in the concluding remarks about Mannheim."

Address on the opening of a planned book exhibition in Reykjavik, Iceland

In Sept 1942, TSE accepted an invitation from the British Council to speak at the opening of an exhibition of British books in Iceland. Ill health forced him to cancel, however, and the exhibition was postponed. When the British Council renewed its request in Apr 1943, TSE again consented. However, the arrangements then proposed differed substantially from what TSE had been promised in the fall: what was to have been a one-week excursion undertaken by air now became a three-week expedition by sea, with no definite plan for his return to the UK. As negotiations dragged on, TSE came to feel that he was being manipulated, and on 7 May he asked his acquaintance the diplomat Stephen Gaselee to intercede. By 12 May the visit had been called off, to TSE's relief. By this time, however, he had already written his address (TS, 19pp), parts of which are adapted from "The Social Function of Poetry," TSE's recent address to the British-Norwegian Institute (6.436), and from "Civilisation: The Nature of Cultural Relations," his recent address to the Anglo-Swedish Society (6.420).

Adding to TSE's frustration was the list he received on 4 May of the books to be exhibited, which had been selected by the British Ministry of Information. "I have preserved in my possession a copy of the list of books exhibited as evidence of British Culture," he commented ironically to John Hayward on 7 May. "[I]n the list headed MODERN FICTION, BIOGRAPHY AND BELLES LETTRES, I failed to find the names of Virginia Woolf, Forster, Elizabeth Bowen, or Graham Greene. There was simply no Poetry, Literary Criticism, or Literary Scholarship AT ALL." After the cancellation he wrote on 13 May to William Bridges-Adams of the British Council: "If the exhibition is to be postponed again, may I suggest that it would give an opportunity for somebody to make a more intelligent selection of books. . . . It is hardly too much to say, indeed, that if I had seen the list at an earlier stage I should have been far from keen to open the exhibition."

I feel that this occasion calls for something more than the words of greeting and explanation with which an Exhibition is usually opened. You will not expect me to be an expert on all the types of book here represented: so I propose to give most of the time to talking about what I know most about, which is poetry, and modern English poetry in particular. But before I begin on that, there are a few things I might say about these books in general. I am not an encyclopaedia, and cannot explain all the books you will see, or discuss progress in science, medicine and law; but I do know something about books as books, even when I do not understand what is inside them. What I mean is, that I am a publisher as well as an author, and therefore know something about the demand and the supply of books at the present time.

The books in this Exhibition in which I am most interested, and to which I draw particular attention, are those which have been published within the last three and a half years, under war-time conditions. These are also the books which are least likely to be known to anyone here, because of the interruption of transport during these years. This selection is necessarily incomplete. For one reason, a balanced selection of all the books published, and worth publishing, during these three years, would be too big to be possible; for another, it is impossible to have such an exhibition wholly up to date, so as to give a clear picture of what is still being done in 1943. The conditions, of course, have become increasingly difficult. The first is the supply of paper. England does not normally produce anything like all of the paper it uses for books. The material of paper is bulky, and the ships are needed for other purposes. In war time paper is needed for all sorts of purposes beyond the ordinary needs. In binding books, also, experiments have had to be made with substitutes. Most firms, whether publishers, printers or binders, suffer from a shortage of labour, owing to the claims of the forces and of vital war industry; and often it is the men engaged in more highly skilled work, who have left us. If you saw a typical selection of books dated 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943, you would observe some deterioration in the quality of production: you would notice that the paper and binding were often not so good, that the print was smaller and the margins narrower – for we want to give the most matter while using as little paper as possible. Nevertheless, I should be proud to show such an exhibit, for when one knows the difficulties which have been overcome, it is remarkable that books are so well produced and so numerous. Not the least of the difficulties is that the demand for books, in spite of the obstruction of oversea markets, has very much increased. Books go out of print very quickly, and can be replaced only slowly: it often happens, with a successful book, that if you do not get a copy at once you may have to wait for some months. And it is also interesting that this new interest in reading has on the whole benefited the good and serious books, rather than the more trashy: benefited the serious books, both when they are first published, and in cheap reprints and cheap editions. It has increased the demand for old books as well as new: it is impossible to keep all the English classics in print.

So much for that side of it. Now what about the authors? Obviously, many writers, and specialists who from time to time produce a book giving the results of their researches, are now otherwise engaged. These war-time occupations do not work altogether evenly. Some specialists, whether scientists, jurists, physicians or others, are so occupied with war work in various capacities that they have no time; some, for various reasons, have as much time; a few have more time. There have to be scholars retained to carry on the work of the universities; and in the arts and humanities subjects, they have fewer pupils, for in these subjects the university course is for most cut short, and many young people defer their university education altogether until after the war. Some authors, of course, suffer from two handicaps: the destruction, or partial destruction, of some libraries by bombing, and the removal of others to safer quarters; and also the lack of intercourse between the scholars of various countries, and the lack of new foreign books on their subjects.

In the field of literature – poetry, fiction, the drama, belles lettres – it is obvious that the present conditions bear most hardly on the young. In the drama, for instance, there is a demand for new plays, though on the other hand most of the small theatres, where a young playwright might get his play tried on a small scale, have had to close. But only the experienced dramatist, who has mastered the technique of the theatre, and who therefore does not have to spend time over getting the machinery of his play right, can produce a good play under the conditions of writing. Hence the temporary disappearance of the poetic drama, of which there had been a revival during the ten years before the war. I can speak of this from my own experience. Those of us who have been anxious to revive the poetic drama are men who have been experienced poets, but inexperienced dramatists. We have had to struggle with an unfamiliar technique, that of the theatre: and try to acquire, with much labour, that skill of the theatre which is second nature to the prose dramatist whose first interest has always been the stage. We simply have not had the time to write dramatic poetry. The younger men, of course, are otherwise employed: but even a writer who is nominally carrying on his peace-time activities, has found his time broken by material difficulties and by war-time duties. I think that similar difficulties must confront the novelist. Many young writers who would, I am sure, be writing novels in peace time, are far too busy for a work of such length. And the work of the novelist is often to record, and to analyse, contemporary society: and in a world which is changing, we do not quite know to what, and which in any case is now in a peculiar and transitory state, I think that some novelists, and among them some of the more conscientious, must find their material disappearing even while they deal with it.

I do not wish to give you simply a sombre picture of the present state of English literature. On the contrary, when one understands the handicap of the creative writer to-day, I think we have no reason to be ashamed or apprehensive. And I have as yet said nothing about poetry. I know my own difficulties, which are those of one who is now an elder poet: they are chiefly of time. My chief interest is still the poetic drama: but as you will understand from what I have already said, I gave up the hope, and even the desire, to write anything of the sort during this war.[1] I have therefore been writing a kind of poem developed under the conditions of war in relation to my own life: that is to say, I have worked out a kind of poem which is the longest that I can get the time to conceive and put into shape.[2] I don't write about the war, and I believe that what I have been trying to say in verse is essentially what I should have been trying to say now even if the war had never happened, though I may say it in rather a different form: if feelings and emotions due to the war come into my verse of themselves, that is all right. This seems to me, speaking for myself, the only possible attitude for anyone who has been writing poetry for some thirty years before this war began. You will forgive, I hope, my talking in this way about myself; for I only do it to lead up to the question of "war poetry."

One thing which seems certain is that at the present time there are more young men writing verse than before the war. There are even many whose names were unknown, even to me, who see a great deal of the work of young poets, three years ago: there is certainly more verse by young poets worth publishing. Besides those who have had volumes of their own published, there are others who have written interesting poems which have appeared in recent anthologies; and there is still one periodical, and a very interesting one, which publishes nothing but new verse and criticism of verse.[3] Is this, people are asking, a time of renaissance of poetry?

A word of caution is necessary. Great poets are always and in every language, rare. Good minor poets are not too common: and there is not enough historical evidence to show that war produces great poets. Nevertheless, the amount, and the quality of the poetry being written by young men is not without importance. A small number will one day prove themselves to be poets; there are some already, and there will be more, among the lost, of whom we cannot say whether they would have become poets or not. A larger number will prove themselves as writers, or as men of distinction, in other walks of life: for we must remember that many of them take to verse now, because it is the only form of expression – the short poem of immediate experience or feeling – which is possible in the life they are leading. By no means all of the poems they write are concerned with the war itself, except, very often, with the narrowly limited experience of it that can come directly to one man. For the bigger the war, the more aware the individual is, how little he himself sees of it. None of them is in a position to see "the war," but only his little bit of it, with its endurances, weariness, patience and loneliness. So, while there is "war poetry," there is little that we could call military poetry.

But as for real literature of war, or affected by war, I do not think that this is the time at which to expect it. It is only years afterwards, when a man can look back on his experience and understand it, and see it in relation to the rest of his life, that any masterpiece of writing about war can be created. The poetry of the younger poets now, those for whom the war is a part of adolescence and young manhood, and who have begun writing since the war has begun, can so far only serve as the document of a generation, and as evidence of its value. The real poets among them are those who will survive as writers, not only the experience of the war but the experience of adapting themselves to the world after the war. This leads me to offer some remarks about modern English poetry in general: and by "modern" I mean the kind of poetry that has been written in the last thirty years.

To talk about modern poetry, however, means to go back further, and make some more general remarks about English poetry, which may help to explain its rather bewildering variety. No literature, I think, in modern Europe, has been exposed to a greater force and variety of foreign influence than has that of England. This is largely due, no doubt, to our geographical position: between the Latin culture, to the south, the Germanic, to the east, the Scandinavian, to the northeast and north, and the Celtic, in closer contact to the north-west and west. The successive waves of invasion, in the early middle ages, brought different cultures which became assimilated to each other, different elements which are evident in our speech, and I would add, different rhythms which appear in our poetry. And after our own language had become established, the influence of all of these surrounding areas has been felt, at different times generally, and on particular poets individually. For periods of varying length, English poetry has tended, alternately, to live on its own past and to live on assimilation of foreign influence. So you cannot say that English poetry is most like that of the Latin races, or of the Germanic, or the Celtic, or the Scandinavian: it is more like one or the other, in different poets and at different times.

There is a second peculiarity of the English language which is more evident when we approach "modern" poetry. That is, that English is the language of several peoples spread widely over the surface of the globe. For some of the peoples of the British Isles alone, I would remind you that English is a language which has been acquired within historical times. For the Celt, whether in Ireland, Wales, or Northern Scotland, even when his only language is English, something of the way of feeling, and of the rhythm of speech, persist: and these ancestral traces come out more clearly in poetry than in any other writing. It is so also for the Southern Scot: the Scots of southern Scotland is a different language from English. I have never known an Englishman who could speak Scots like a native. We can read the language – with a dictionary: and when we read the poetry of the greater Scottish poets who wrote in that language, not only Burns but the poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we can see that there are some things which can be said better, some kinds of poetry which are more perfect, in Scots than in English. But besides the peoples near at hand, who have for only a matter of centuries written poetry in English, there are the English-speaking peoples over seas. In modern poetry, the influence of American poetry upon English poetry is something which we cannot ignore. The American poets of the eighteenth century, and most of the poets of the nineteenth century who were most admired in their own time, were sometimes original, but they had no influence outside of their own country: with Poe first, and Walt Whitman second, American influence became one to be reckoned with.

We have then, in English poetry, to allow for, first the various strains in our ancestry, one or another of which may be prominent in any individual; second, the direct literary influences at different times; third, the relations of the various English-speaking peoples, both those in the same islands and those over sea. It is with the present situation that I am primarily concerned. Now, one might expect one of two things to happen. The different peoples speaking the same language might each develop its own literature in isolation: in this event one would expect, in the course of a few centuries, to see the original English language develop into a number of related, but distinct languages, much as all our northern tongues developed; or still more closely, as the modern Latin languages developed out of the parent Latin. Or we might predict that a general uniformity would prevail, so that there would only be one English literature, in which it would be of minor importance where an author was born, or where he lived.

I do not think that either of these tendencies is likely to prevail, at least in any future in which we are interested. First, let me consider the possibility of different languages. Apart from the general conditions increasing the intercourse, and reciprocal influence, of people speaking the same language to-day, it is unlikely that authors writing the English language in any part of the world will be unaware of the work of the best authors writing it in any other part. If they read it, they are certain to be influenced by it, in proportion to its power. It is true that the centre of gravity, so to speak, may shift from time to time from one place to another: it will shift according to where the most powerful writers happen to be born and live. But such variations of cultural focus will not, in themselves, lead to the separation of one literature from another. The authors will have their public wherever the language is spoken. I have, it is true, observed sometimes that second-rate authors sometimes are more highly rated, for a while, abroad than at home; and that the influence of the really important writers may be slow to spread: this is more true where different languages are concerned, but also true to some extent with the same language. But in the long run, it is the greatest authors who come to be recognised, and to have influence, everywhere. It is this which has tended to preserve some degree of unity in European literature, and which will tend to preserve unity of the same language everywhere.

But there is an opposite force which works especially strongly upon poetry. There is none of the higher arts which is more obstinately local than poetry. We all know, to begin with, how much is lost, in the poetry of any language, in translation. Nothing, perhaps, is quite the same when translated: but we all feel sure that we lose less, in reading a novel in a translation, than in reading a poem; and in a translation of some kinds of scientific work, the loss may be virtually nil. That poetry is much more local than prose, can be seen in the development particularly of the Latin languages. Through the middle ages, to within a few hundred years ago, Latin remained the language for philosophy, theology, and science. The impulse towards the use of the language of the common people began with poetry. This appears natural, when we realise that poetry has most to do with feeling and emotion; and that feeling and emotion are more local than thought. It is easier to think in a foreign language, than it is to feel in it. No art is more stubbornly national than poetry. A people may have its language suppressed, and another language imposed by law and taught in the schools: but unless you can teach that people to feel in a new language, you have not got rid of the old one, and it will come to life again in poetry first of all. When I say "feel in a new language" I mean something different from "expressing one's feelings in a new language." A thought expressed in a different language may be practically the same thought, but a feeling or emotion becomes a different feeling or emotion. One of the reasons for learning at least one foreign language well, is that we become, in using it, a somewhat different person; one of the reasons for not learning to use a foreign language instead of our own, is that nobody really wants to become a different person. Thus a superior language can seldom be exterminated, except by exterminating the people who speak it.

The language of the poet must be the language of the people about him. This is his material: not an abstract language, as taught in a grammar, not even the language of his whole nation, if it is an extensive one; but the language of his own part of the country, of his own village, of his own family: the language as he hears it around him spoken by the people he mixes with. Every language has its own character: the structure, the rhythm, the sound, the idiom of a language express the personality of the people which speaks it, the way it feels about life. So people find the deepest, as well as the most conscious, expression of their feelings in the poetry of their own language: rather than in any other art or in the poetry of other languages.

But the structure, the rhythm, the sound, the vocabulary of any language, must vary when people speaking the same language live in different places under widely differing conditions. You have only to listen to the sound of the poetry of an Irish poet, read by an Irishman, with the sound of English poetry read by an Englishman, to feel a great difference. I should say that if English, Irish, Scottish, [and] American poetry all became so uniform that you could no longer tell one from another, it would probably all be second-rate verse. As a matter of fact, they tend to become more different, although they influence each other: and if you consider, you will agree that this must be so, since they couldn't influence each other unless they were different. Each must remain true to its own soil, its own climate, its own way of life, if they are to be of any use to each other. The older, more conventional type of American poetry was American primarily in so far as it took American subjects to write about: but it wrote about them in the style of English poets of the same or an elder generation. Hence it had no influence in England. There is a great difference between the influence which is merely domination, and the influence which stimulates the originality of the person or people influenced.

At the present time there is not only a distinctly different character to English and to American poetry. I have observed regional tendencies among younger poets in the British Isles themselves. The stimulus of Irish literature upon English, has somewhat waned since the death of two great Irish writers, William Butler Yeats and James Joyce, though there is a distinct, and distinctly original Irish contribution in the work of Mr. Louis MacNeice. But there has been an increased local consciousness in the work of a number of young Welsh poets writing in English, and writing it, when they are men of original power, with a different rhythm, imagination and sensibility from that of English poets; and there is the beginning of such awakening among some Scottish poets too. The American and the Irish influence upon English poetry are still alive, though the Welsh has increased within the last few years. And with all this regional activity, we may see in time a greater self-consciousness among English poets as well.

What I should expect to happen is something like this. There may be periods, such as that we have been living through, when poetry written in the various cultural areas where the English language is spoken will tend to differ widely. Assuming, as I must assume, that we go on producing poets – not necessarily everywhere at the same time – these differences will lead to influence. The strong poet in one area will influence poets writing English in other areas. Then there might follow a period in which the tendency was for everybody to write alike everywhere. In such a period the different parts of the English-speaking world would tend to fall apart so far as literature goes: for there is no point in importing poetry when you are producing exactly the same article at home. Having ceased to bother about each other, they might then start again producing variations which would interest each other: and so the cycle would go on. And I do not consider this guess too fanciful. For the history of English literature in England, shows periods in which we imitated foreign models, followed by periods in which this foreign influence, having been digested, led to something original; followed by periods in which there was no foreign influence, and English literature stagnated. The last was the situation about the beginning of the present century.

I have been talking up to now, about poetry in the English language only, as a guide to the bewildering varieties which it presents. But what I have said can be applied also to the poetry of different languages, and especially to the poetry of Europe. I do not believe that the cultures of the several countries of Europe can flourish in isolation from each other. There have been, in the past, high civilisations, producing great thought, art and literature, developed in comparative isolation. But if anything like a European unity is to be restored and preserved, each local civilisation must be, from time to time, revitalised from outside. A universal autarchy, in these matters, simply will not do. I may draw on my experience, as editor of a quarterly review which was started in 1922 and which I brought to an end in 1939. My original intention was to make it a review of a new kind, one which should give equal place to English, American, and European contributors: not choosing, from the latter, those who were already well known in England, or even those who were already famous in their own countries, but trying to find the most important writers of my own generation, and younger, with whom men of the same age, and of the same intellectual level, in England, ought to be in communication. The review was literary and not political, and it imposed no restrictions of doctrine or point of view. Such a periodical obviously could not fulfil its purpose alone; and I tried to establish, and for a time did establish, relations with similar periodicals in several other European capitals; there was even a certain exchange of contributors. I hoped that in this way, we might bring it about that the best that was thought and said, of European importance, might be made quickly accessible to the right public in every country. I had hoped to extend my relations, either direct or through reliable correspondents: but after a few years, I found them contracting. You will understand what happened. I had had several Italian contributors: after the Italian revolution, there appeared to [be] less and less, of European value to take from there. After the German revolution, the effect was still more marked; for in the new isolation in which that nation enclosed itself, the new writers did not cease to be of European value – they ceased to be intelligible. They were talking another language, in a very different sense from that in which German had been another language before. For other reasons, the dissensions and disturbance of life in Spain silenced the voices of men of letters in that country. And with this breaking up of Europe, it seemed to me that we also, and the French, had less to contribute: our writers were thinking and talking for readers at home, and not for Europe. We all became more provincial.

But if separation of cultures, within the area of Europe, is a misfortune, so also would be uniformity. There is much to be said, I know, for some universal simplified language like Esperanto – for limited purposes: but I sometimes wonder whether the enthusiasts for such a language realise how limited these uses are.[4] For some simple kinds of trading, for enabling anybody to travel through a foreign country, and get his washing done in a foreign hotel, it would be wholly satisfactory. In the most important matters, there would be a complete lack of communication. Nobody, certainly, would want to write poetry in Esperanto: for poetry is a constant reminder of all the things that can only be said in one language. A real language has to take root, and grow in the soil, of a country. There are only two ways to communicate with somebody who speaks a different language to your own: either through your language, or through his. Misunderstandings enough can arise in these ways, but [are] nothing to what would arise if both spoke an artificial language. Spiritual communication between peoples depends upon those persons, in each country, who take the trouble to learn the language of the others; the persons who are able, to a greater or less degree, to feel in another language as well as in their own. But if we had one world language, and all dropped our native language, what would happen? I think that in the course of time we should find ourselves no better off than before: for this universal language, after being spoken by very different races living in different ways and in different parts of the world, would very soon split up into dialects so different that we could not talk to each other. We should have wasted time for nothing. I think, in fact, that the Tower of Babel was a very fortunate event, and that human progress began only after the confusion of tongues.[5] A real language is the gradual creation of a particular people living in a particular place. If they have always lived in that place, they must preserve their language to preserve themselves as a people; if they have come from somewhere else, they must gradually adapt their language to the place where they have come to live.

Poetry, I have suggested, expresses the language of a people, and the soul of that people, more fully than any other means of artistic expression. People who do not enjoy poetry are cut off from one means of understanding the spirit of their own race, as well as that of others; and those who do, have another means of understanding other races as well as their own. I have implied that there were qualities of the poetry of every language, which only those to whom that language is native can fully understand. But there is another side to this too. I have sometimes found, in trying to read a language I did not know very well, that I could not understand a piece of prose writing until I understood it according to the standards of the schoolteacher: that is, had to be sure of the meaning of every word, grasp the grammar and syntax, and then think the passage out in English. I have also found, that sometimes a piece of poetry, which I could not translate, containing many words unfamiliar to me, and sentences which I could not construe, conveyed something immediate and vivid as sensation; something unique, different from anything in English, something which I could not explain in English but felt that I understood. And on learning that language better, I have found that this impression was not an illusion, not something which I had imagined to be in the poem but [which was] not really there. So through poetry you can, now and then, leap across the barrier of a foreign language, and catch something of the spirit of another people.

I suggest, finally, that from studying the history of poetry, and studying also the way that a language is used in poetry, we can perhaps learn something instructive about the proper relations of different peoples to each other. We can draw some lesson from the fact that poetry has to be local, before it can be universal; that it has to have a particular value for the people of the poet, before it can have a general value for mankind; that it must grow in its own soil, and develop in conformity with the spiritual climate surrounding it: but that also it needs to be fertilised by influences from abroad. In speaking of poetry in the English language, I have urged that its several parts – the poetry written by different English-speaking peoples – could only be of value to each other by being different from each other, could only form a whole by each having a distinct and individual place; and I then suggested that the same law could be applied to a group of different languages with a cultural bond between them – in fact, to Europe. This is a level which lies deeper, and is more permanent, than that of politics. It is concerned with something more secure than political or economic organisation of international affairs. Unless Europe can recover some cultural unity, the more superficial efforts for union will not go very far or last very long. To aim at an identical form of government, an identical social or economic system everywhere, to aim at a world league or leagues, a federation or federations, will otherwise be building a house before you have dug the foundations. Still more fantastic, of course, is any attempt to unite Europe under the dominion of any one nation in it. We learn also, from poetry and the use of language in poetry, that in a language, and in the people who speak it, we have to do not with something that has been constructed, but which has grown to be what it is. And things which have grown to be what they are, are not always very reasonable: I suppose that perfectly rational planners, if they took to planning our languages for us, would at once do away with all irregular verbs: and would at once meet with the instinctive resistance of a united people. There is something in life which cannot be planned, but to which planning must conform and submit. The "New Order" in Europe can be made to look very reasonable and advantageous to everybody: it is only that the peoples of Europe refuse to admit that any one nation is superior to all the rest. And when they are oppressed and helpless, what do they do about it? They write poetry. Even if they cannot publish what they write, this is a way of keeping alive the genius of their language, and the language of a people is the symbol of its unity and individuality. Whether, under these conditions, they succeed in producing any great poetry, I have no means of knowing. But that is not the point; any more than it is of the first importance whether any of the verses scribbled by our own young soldiers, on odd sheets of paper in odd parts of the world, will have a permanent place in English literature. What is important is to keep alive the expression of the feeling and emotion which are not quite the same for any two peoples, and so keep alive something which should, in the future as in the past, be a contribution to the life of other peoples as well as to our own.

NOTES

1. TSE's latest play, *The Family Reunion*, ran in London from 21 Mar through 22 Apr 1939; his next play would be *The Cocktail Party*, first performed in 1949.

2. *Four Quartets* was published for the first time as a suite on 11 May 1943.

3. Probably Ronald Duncan's *Townsman*. On TSE's mixed feelings about this journal see his "Commentary" for the *NEW* of 5 Dec 1940 (6.149).

4. Esperanto was developed as an international language by L. L. Zamenhof in 1887.

5. In the biblical story, men begin to build "a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" until God intercedes to "confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech," and to "scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:1-9).

To the Editor of *Aventura*[1]

Aventura, 3 (July 1943) 111-14

Dear Sir, – Since I received the first number of *Aventura* I have felt the desire to write to you a word of greeting and congratulation.[2] To initiate such a periodical in these times requires a spirit of enterprise which is appropriately expressed by the title of your review. I hope I may be pardoned if the occasion revives memories of my own experience as editor of a literary periodical, and of the designs which I entertained. They represent a period of seventeen years, from 1922 to 1939; and the experience, not of one editor, but of a literary periodical, during that period, which aimed at a *European* standard.

What do I mean by a "European" view? When I was given the opportunity, in 1922, of starting a literary periodical, my ambition was to publish work of the highest common standard of the European countries.

Every journal must of course be addressed primarily to a public in its own country, and for that public, the public which applies the most critical tests to its native writers, I wished to supply writing by contemporary writers in other European countries, of the same quality as that which they would expect from the best writers of their own language.

By these highest standards, they would judge the work of the foreign writers; and the work of these foreign writers would maintain, and in many ways elevate, the standards they should expect of their own.

For no European literature, I am convinced, can long flourish in isolation from the others; and I thought the time ripe, after the war of 1914-1918, for not only a restoration, but an extension, of intellectual communication with the Continent.

But a *European* literary review, as I conceived it, had another function than this. To introduce the work of those contemporary foreign writers who have the greatest significance in their own countries – and that is not merely to translate the most *famous*, but to discover the important writers of one's own time even before they are known to any but the most discriminating readers in their own countries – and to provide regular chronicles of literary events in as many countries as I could establish contacts with (the suggestion for these was provided by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*)[3] is a considerable task in itself, and one, as I discovered, which could not be performed by one man alone; I was fortunate in gathering colleagues with special knowledge and with personal relations in various countries.

But foreign trade does not consist merely in import, but in import and export; and not between two countries only, but amongst a number of countries of different needs and resources: and similarly, the intellectual life of Europe requires interchange of ideas between a number of nations.

In effect, you cannot have *one* European Review: you need at least one in each of at least half a dozen countries, each doing much the same work for its own public, and each in communication with the others.

For I am convinced (I may say in explanation) that the ultimate unity of Europe cannot come through identity of political organisation, or a legal-political federation, or a vague brotherly love, or an identity of interests among the masses of the people, but from the unity of the Christian Faith, and the unity in diversity of civilisation and cultures which Christianity brought about in the past.

And for the latter, I believe that the literary periodicals of the highest standards in each European capital have a responsibility, not only to their readers at home, but to each other.

For a few years it seemed as if my hopes might approximate as nearly to realisation as human hopes can; and there were half a dozen literary periodicals, some now extinct, some, alas! the same only in name, which could, in time, have done a great deal in spontaneous co-operation.[4]

We know what happened; and we saw political divergences, which in part represented a normal reaction against the nineteenth-century illusion that there must be one ideal form of government equally suitable for every nation, encroach upon the field of culture, until political variety became cultural disunion. In a situation in which the chief cultural effort of each country is to *protect itself* against the culture of others, such interchange as my review *The Criterion* and the other reviews I have in mind required, became impossible.

Those of us who were engaged in that attempt during the twenty years between the wars, may have resigned our personal hopes, but have not, I am sure, abandoned our aspirations. We trust that Europe will not follow the same course again; and we look for another literary generation to realise our frustrated ambitions.

These thoughts came to my mind as I turned the pages of the first number of *Aventura*, in which I saw a hope of revival of the crushed European spirit. My chief excuse for exposing these thoughts, is to give assurance of the interest with [which] I shall follow your adventurous course. I hope that you will be able to say, like the hero of the opera, *mir lacht das Abenteuer*![5]

Cordially yours,
T. S. ELIOT

PUBLISHED TRANSLATION

Caro senhor, – Desde que recebi o primeiro número da «Aventura», senti o desejo de lhe escrever uma palavra de saudação e regozijo.[2] Inciar um periódico como o seu, nos tempos que vão correndo, requere um espírito de iniciativa que o titular da sua revista exprime com propriedade. Espero me perdôe se lhe disser que êste facto veio ressuscitar as recordações da minha experiência como editor de um periódico literário e dos desígnios a que me propunha. Elas representam um período de dezassete anos, de 1922 a 1939; e a experiência não apenas de um editor mas de qualquer periódico literário que naquêle período se propusesse a um nível *europeu*.

Que quero eu dizer com uma revista *europeia*? Quando me deram a oportunidade, em 1922, de lançar um periódico literário, a minha ambição traduzia-se na publicação de trabalhos de um alto nível comum aos países europeus.

Toda a publicação deve, como é óbvio, dirigir-se em primeiro lugar ao público do seu próprio país; e a êsse público, que aplica aos escritores nacionais os mais rigorosos juizos, desejava eu oferecer produções de escritores contemporâneos estrangeiros, da mesma qualidade que seria de exigir aos melhores escritores da própria língua.

Pelo alto nível apresentado, o público poderia apreciar a obra dos escritores estrangeiros; e a obra dêstes escritores manteria, e de certo modo elevaria, o nível exigido aos escritores nacionais.

Pois que, estou convencido, nenhuma literatura europeia pode, isolada das outras, desenvolver-se completamente; e eu, depois da guerra de 1914-18 achei o tempo como que amadurecido, não só para uma restauração, mas para uma extensão do intercâmbio intelectual com o continente.

Porém, uma revista literária *europeia*, como eu a concebia, tinha outra função além desta. Apresentar a obra daquêles escritores estrangeiros que tenham o máximo significado nos seus próprios países (e com isto não, apenas, traduzir os mais *famosos*, mas descobrir os escritores importantes do seu próprio tempo, mesmo antes de terem ultrapassado a observação dos

mais lúcidos leitores seus compatriotas) e estabelecer, com regularidade, crónicas dos acontecimentos literários nos diferentes paìses com os quais desejava relacionar-me – sugestão colhida na «Nouvelle Revue Française»[3] – tudo isto é em si, uma tarefa considerável e, como me apercebi, não poderia ser levada a cabo por um homem só; tive a sorte de encontrar camaradas especialmente conhecedores e com relações pessoais nos diferentes países.

O intercâmbio internacional, porém, não consiste apenas em importação, mas em importação e exportação; e não apenas entre dois países, mas entre um certo número de países com recursos e necessidades diferentes: semelhantemente, a vida intelectual da Europa, exige uma troca de ideias entre várias nações.

Com efeito, eu não poderia ter uma *revista europeia*: precisava, sim, de uma em pelo menos meia dúzia de países, cada uma executando idêntica missão no seu pais e comunicando simultâneamente com as outras.

É que eu estou convencido (e devo explicar-me) que a unidade última da Europa não pode realizar-se através de uma identidade de organização política, ou de uma federação política legal, ou de um vago amor fraterno ou ainda de uma identidade de interêsses das massas populares, mas através da unidade da Fé Cristã, da unidade na diversidade de civilização e culturas que a Cristandade fez nascer no passado.

Quanto a êste último, eu creio que estas revistas literárias de elevada categoria em cada capital europeia, têm responsabilidades não só particularmente perante os seus leitores como ainda umas perante as outras.

Durante alguns anos, parecia que as minhas esperanças se aproximavam de uma realização efectiva quanto, humanamente, isso é possível às esperanças; havia já uma meia dúzia de revistas literárias, algumas agora extintas, outras, infelizmente, existindo apenas no nome, que poderiam ter feito, a seu tempo, muito para uma cooperação expontânea.[4]

Todos nós sabemos o que aconteceu; vimos divergências políticas, que representavam, em parte, uma reacção natural contra a ilusão do séc. XIX de que deveria haver uma forma ideal de govêrno igualmente aplicável a qualquer nação, encrustarem-se no campo da cultura, até a variedade política degenerar em desunião cultural. Numa situação como esta, em que o esfôrço cultural de cada país é *proteger-se* a si próprio contra a cultura dos outros, o intercâmbio, tal como a minha revista «The Criterion» e outras revistas que eu tenho em mente requeriam, tornou-se impossível.

Os que embarcaram neste desejo durante os vinte anos decorridos entre as duas guerras podem ter abdicado dessas nossas esperanças pessoais mas,

estou certo, não abandonaram as nossas aspirações. Confiamos em que a Europa não seguirá, outra vez, o mesmo caminho e contamos que uma outra geração literária leve a cabo as nossas frustradas ambições.

Estes pensamentos vieram ao meu espírito enquanto folheava as páginas do I.º número da «Aventura», no qual pressenti uma esperança de renovação do esmagado espírito europeu. A minha principal desculpa ao expôr êstes pensmentos é garantir-lhe o interêsse com que hei-de seguir a sua rota de aventura. Espero possa dizer, como o herói da ópera «alegra-me a aventura!»[5]

De todo o coração,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] The little magazine *Aventura: Revista bimestral de cultura* [Adventure: A Bimonthly Journal of Culture] published five issues between May 1942 and Sept 1944. The journal was founded and edited in Lisbon by Ruy Cinatti (1915-86), a London-born Portuguese poet, agronomist, and anthropologist. TSE's letter was published in English with a parallel translation into Portuguese.

[2] TSE's support for *Aventura* was solicited by the British Hispanist Charles David Ley, whom he had met during his 1938 visit to Portugal, and who was now teaching English at the British Institute in Lisbon. TSE told Ley on 3 July 1942 that he "should certainly like to support such an effort, especially at a time when a certain interest in English literature is creeping into Lisbon," and he promised "something in the way of a message to *Aventura*, though I am afraid it may be some weeks before I can find the time." TSE finally sent Ley this letter on 11 Nov, requesting that his correspondent "use your own discretion whether to pass it on to the editor of that magazine."

[3] At the invitation of Jacques Rivière, TSE published two "Lettres d'Angleterre" in the *NRF* in 1922 (2.399, 2.424) and another in 1923 (2.489).

[4] Edited during the German occupation by Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, the *NRF* had become a collaborationist journal.

[5] From Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act I. This line, however, is not in fact sung by the hero, but by the heroine, in the episode known as "Isolde's Narrative and Curse." Just before imprecating both Tristan and herself, Isolde sardonically imagines how Tristan must have offered to woo her on behalf of King Marke, ending with the line TSE quotes: "What a marvellous adventure!" (literally, "The adventure laughs for me"). The Portuguese translation of TSE's letter renders the line "allegra-ma a aventura!" [the adventure gladdens me].

Presidential message to Books Across the Sea

Books Across the Sea (BAS) was founded in 1941 by the American-born typographical scholar Beatrice Warde (1900-69) to remedy the wartime scarcity of British books in the United States and of American books in Britain. The organization's letterhead described it as a "society of American and British friends of books, acting as one group to promote mutual understanding between the English reading peoples." The four BAS branches, or "Circles," were based in London, Edinburgh, New York, and Boston; each collected a transatlantic library of volumes.

Recruited by the lecturer and author Alicia Street (1911-85), who chaired the London Circle, and by the Oxford don Arthur Lehman Goodhart (1891-1978) – both, like Warde, originally American – TSE agreed in May 1943 to an appointment as president of the English circle – at first on an interim basis before his permanent election on 3 June. A *TLS* editorial of 26 June lauded TSE's election as one of "especial felicity" and congratulated BAS "on securing in England as its President at this fateful time a provocative thinker of original and acute perception . . . who has ranged the literatures of Europe" (307). TSE would continue to serve until March 1948, when BAS was absorbed by the English Speaking Union.

On 14 July 1943, Street wrote TSE to request "a message to members of Books Across the Sea for our next Bulletin. As you know," she explained, "we usually try to get out an informal account of our activities once a month, and I know that many of our people are hoping that you will occasionally contribute something." On 8 Aug, TSE sent her his typescript (2pp), writing: "I hope that something like the enclosed will do? If not, will you say what you want? Perhaps there are other points you would like mentioned at this time." Street replied on 11 Aug, thanking him for his contribution, which she had read "with gratitude and pleasure. We hope to get the Bulletin off next week." No copy of the Aug or later issue of the Bulletin, which was mimeographed for mailing to members, has been located in the BAS or other archives.

I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the honour of having become President of the English Circle of "Books Across the Sea" – of being one in what I trust will be a long succession. Being already extremely busy, and recognizing in myself no capacity to be president of anything, I accepted with some reluctance. I was informed that the Circle had the benefit of a highly efficient Chairman and Staff, and that I should have nothing to do: I am already assured of the truth of the first of these assertions, but I am still uneasy about the second. I am impressed by all that is being accomplished by a very small staff in a still smaller space. But in a venture like this, expanding and developing, it will be difficult to keep pace with new and increasing demands: and I suspect that for a long time there will be more than enough work to go round.

Like some other institutions, "Books Across the Sea" is a product of war time which is likely to become a permanent necessity. If some of its functions come to an end, in time of peace, others will become a more important; and new ones, I am sure, will present themselves. The difficulties and delays of communication between the two countries, at a time when it had become of vital importance that each should know what the other was thinking, have shown the value of these Circles. And now, I think, we are convinced that after the war people on both sides of the Atlantic will want to know more – and will be asking more intelligent questions – about what is being thought and done on the other, than ever before. "Books Across the Sea" answers a good many questions already; and in the future changing world, it may have to answer questions and fulfill functions of which no one could have dreamt a few years ago. I believe that there will be, for instance, increasing scope for service to schools in both Britain and America, and an important work of liaison in the educational field. In the work to come I think that there should be a large place for unofficial organisations such as this, towards that cultural understanding between countries which is, in the long run, more important than politics.

At the present time, however, "Books Across the Sea" has no need to look for new jobs to do. These will come of themselves. One development which I should like to see (before the present offices are entirely filled with books) is our establishment in larger premises – conveniently situated for members, and rather nearer to the ground – with a spacious reading room to appeal both to the browser and to the studious note-taker, and at least an alcove provided with all the American periodicals which at present one can't get.[1] The immediate problem is to make it easier to carry out our present tasks: if we can do this we shall be better prepared to face the new ones as they arise.

NOTE

[1] The headquarters of the English circle and its American Reading Room were located in Aldwych House in central London. In 1944, as TSE hoped, the organization moved into more accommodating quarters nearby, at 13 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn.

Civilisation: The Nature of Cultural Relations[1]

It would, I think, be a waste of time to attempt to revive any of the immediate impressions of a visit to Sweden made a year ago. Other visitors have come and gone since then; and, from what I have seen, superficial impressions received under similar conditions are much the same. Other impressions, when one's first visit to any country has been under the present abnormal conditions, are reserved in the hope of a future comparison in more peaceful times. But among many pleasant memories of hospitality and conversation I should like especially to mention those of my visits to the two great universities. I wished that I could have stayed longer at both Upsala and Lund for the sake of more informal talks with some of the young people there. They formed appreciative and interested audiences; but believing as I do that the greatest value of such visits is to be found, not in the relation of lecturer and audience, but in the relation of individual to individual in conversation, I should have welcomed an opportunity, which only more time could have given, for talks with one or another or with small groups of friends among the undergraduates.

As I have been given unlimited licence to-day to talk about anything I please – you may have noticed that I have not even been pinned down to a subject of my own choosing – I found that I turned irresistibly, not to an account of my visit, but to some of the reflections which have come to my mind arising out of that visit: the question of the purpose which such expeditions ought to serve between the various countries of Europe, and perhaps especially between those which are the closest related in race. I am concerned somewhat with the inevitable limitations of official activity – a question which, I think, is of importance to societies such as this, for the definition of the limits of official activity helps to define the functions which remain to be filled by private associations of persons interested in the relations of two countries in particular. In the first place, does it not strike one as odd that it should require a war to stimulate the purely cultural relations between this country and a friendly neutral with which we have close ties of geography, race and civilisation? What about times of peace? I know that English lecturers were sent to Sweden during the last war, and I understand that in the period between this activity was somewhat neglected. Now, in earlier times, when cultural relations looked after themselves, they pursued their course almost unaffected by wars. The reciprocal influence of England and France was never interrupted by war, though their wars were continual, hardly until the time of Napoleon, precisely the inventor of the modern State and the modern war of peoples. And as in former wars even cultural relations between belligerents were not wholly broken, so such relations between a belligerent and a neutral country were on exactly the same footing as in peace-time. It is curious, then, that nowadays war or, to put it more generally, international politics should make us more culture conscious and bring into being organisations for international relations for cultural communication. During this struggle the international situation must be accepted; but are we to accept it hereafter as permanent in any future conditions of peace?

It is this post-war situation that we ought to be thinking about, and the question whether cultural relations between countries are to be determined by the varying winds of political doctrine and political expediency. Now, it is likely that after this war a great many things will have to be done, if they are done at all, by the State which formerly were done by the devotion of individuals and of voluntary associations – or, at best, that they will have to be done at the State's expense, for private individuals are not likely to have that wide financial margin which makes enterprise possible. And among these things will be included the encouragement of the arts at home – we see already an organisation built up in war-time – and the export of theatrical companies, orchestras, exhibitions of paintings, books perhaps, and lecturers like myself. The question is, and particularly in relation to the export activities, whether these can be conducted without falling under the political influences of the moment and how they should be supplemented by private endeavour.

I do not pretend that there is no relation between the culture of a nation and, in the deeper sense, its politics. But this relation does not imply a dependence of culture upon political currents, whether we mean by that the expedients of Governments or the ideologies of popular theorists. And even assuming that the persons made responsible for cultural relations will always be the most suitable to be found, there are incidental dangers. There is the danger that the purpose will be thought of, obscurely, in terms of *power* and even in terms of analogy to an economics which is out of date. There are still people who believe that the prosperity of a country depends upon exporting as much and importing as little as possible, the "favourable balance," as it is called, representing power in the form of debt, which in the long run, of course, is apt to turn out bad debt. Well, of course, if we apply this principle to our output of cultural goods – art and ideas – we are concerned with an export which is not quantitative, so that we are not depriving ourselves of useful goods or raw material in exporting them. But cultural relations have their own laws. One of them is that every country needs to import as well as to export; that every country needs to know the best thought, art and science of other countries in order to maintain and to develop its own. The history of European civilisation is a history of perpetual cross-fertilisation. Of course, there will be a greater give and take with certain countries than with others; as in trade, you may sell more to one particular country than you buy from it, but there will be some other country from which you take more than you give. But in no case should there be a deliberate attempt to supply a knowledge of British culture to another country without reciprocity; it is no good putting another people in a position to understand us better unless we are also going to make the effort to understand them. So I think that we must both give, take, and also transmit; for London, as the capital of a country which has the Celtic world on its border from the south-west to the north, the Scandinavian to the east, the plattdeutsch to the south-east, and the Latin to the south, is suited to be one of the great *entrepôts* of culture for Europe.[2] And if, as I say, we behave in these matters in a political pattern that is in terms of power (as there must always be danger of when the State is in control), we shall be dealing with spiritual goods in terms of material goods.

Under political influence, I must add, there is not only the danger of a competition in export, and of a kind of cut-throat competition in matters in which there should be no competition, with Germany or any other Power which wishes to sell its culture, there is also the danger of spasms of unbridled *im*port from some powerful country whose friendship we wish to cultivate. There is also the danger of indifference to quality; there is, for example, no real benefit to anybody in sending more orchestras to perform abroad than the Germans do if the German orchestras happen to give better performances. And it would not be a good thing for Europe, or for the world, that cultural influence should become a function only of political or economic power. There is no necessary relation between the value of a civilisation and the number of people who belong to it or the amount of territory it covers; nothing matters except the spiritual, intellectual and aesthetic gifts and achievements of a nation, whether big or small. And the last danger of official activity which I wish to mention is this: the danger of judging accomplishment by statistics. The way to understand another country is through making friends there; it is through one's friends of similar tastes and interests and of analogous habits of life to one's own that one comes to understand another people as a whole. Cultural relations between countries without relations between the right individuals are very shallow; the relations between a gigantic deputation and a gigantic reception committee which entertains it at dinner are not what really count unless they lead to something more personal. And this is one weakness of official visits: one would prefer to meet fewer people at a time and see a good deal more of some of them than there is time for.

Now, Europe is, culturally, a whole, of which no part can flourish in isolation. So, we may say, is the world; but there is this difference: that the unity of Europe has an historical foundation, whereas the unity of the world is only potential. The future of culture is therefore the future of Europe as a whole; and in that way post-war politics must be of great importance to us. There are two dangers: an artificial unification or articulation according to temporary, not permanent, principles, and, on the other hand, an artificial isolation of each country from every other. God knows, there have often been times when the one thing a people has had to do was to fight to preserve its own culture, its own way of life, and preserve it from domination by another. But that is war, not peace. In the long run, this jealous isolation of culture from culture can only end in the atrophy of all. And, on the other hand, it is essential that each should preserve its character. A universal identical culture is no culture.

I experienced something of the changing conditions between the two wars, 1922-39, simply as the result of editing a quarterly literary review of no great circulation. What gives it relevance is the fact that I designed it to be a kind of international literary forum with a large proportion of foreign contributors – not, preferably, those already known in this country, but men just coming to be known in their own. There were in existence during the first few years several magazines of similar type in different foreign capitals – the closest existing analogy to this type is *Bonnier's Literary Magazin*[3] – with which I entered into relations, and amongst us there was a certain traffic in contributors. During the first years after the war there was an eager curiosity (though never, perhaps, among a very large public) among men of letters in each country about what was going on in others – a curiosity stimulating to every one – such that for a few years there seemed promise that a really European mind might be revived and invigorated. Some of the newer countries, or newly reconstituted countries, were not in a position to have much to offer; but there seemed no reason why a period of peace and security should not bring them in, too. The advent of the kind of nationalism which subordinated everything, including culture, to political ideas made itself almost immediately felt. Italy, where there had been a number of interesting writers, became silent; a few years later, Germany, which had contributed largely, became worse than silent – it became unintelligible. The new writers were so German that their products had no meaning outside their own frontiers – with one or two exceptions, who happened to be Christians, and have since ceased to write at all. Spain, of course, was beginning to suffer in another way, from disunity and discord. And with the exclusion of these countries the others seemed to have less to offer also; and even the English authors whose writings were suitable for a European market seemed to diminish in number. We all became more provincial.

From the point of view of the problem of European culture the situation next time is likely to be very different. We have been going through a period of "total" war, which has also been a war of cultures, the nearest thing that the modern world can produce to the earlier wars of religion. In this conflict we have sometimes reproached ourselves in this country for not apparently being able to formulate clearly, in contrast to our opponents, the sort of way of life we were fighting for. I do not think that that is altogether a bad thing. It exposes us to the charge of lack of ideas, of lack of imagination, of having no better vision than that of an unsatisfactory past which we wish to perpetuate or restore. That has been partly true. But what is also true is that any national culture, any way of life, which can be completely expressed in doctrines, in programmes, in declarations and manifestoes is something very much less than the whole reality of what a people stand for. The culture of a people is not a construction, but a growth. Like *agri*-culture, it is something formed over a long period of time by co-operation of man with his environment – not by exploitation of the soil. And in such a growth there must always be a great deal that is below consciousness, that escapes formulation, and which has to be experienced and lived to be understood; hence there is much about it which cannot be, in the term which we use so much nowadays, *planned*. It requires freedom to flourish, and can only be fostered by patience and intuition. The ecology of Europe, the relation of its cultures to each other, is something more permanently binding than what can be formed by common political ideas or [a] common system of government. Europe can be artificially divided, but it can only be naturally united.

To descend from this flight into generalities on to the particular landing-ground of the present occasion, my conclusion is simply that it is the business of the State to facilitate, to assist, rather than to direct, the cultural relations of nations. There is no substitute for the communication between person and person. But between the operations of bodies representing the community as a whole and the more and more limited activities of individuals there is scope, there is, I think, all the more, under modern conditions, need, for the activities of unofficial societies such as this, composed of people specially interested or specially qualified for promoting understanding, to the reciprocal advantage of two members of the European family.[4]

NOTES

1. As printed in *Friendship, Progress, Civilisation: Three War-Time Speeches to the Anglo-Swedish Society* (London: Anglo-Swedish Society, 1943), 15-20. In addition to TSE's paper, this pamphlet includes the texts of two other lectures delivered to the Anglo-Swedish Society in London: "Friendship: Sweden and the War" (1940), by William Forbes-Sempill, Lord Sempill; and "Progress: Sweden and the New Europe" (1941), by Harold Nicolson. A headnote to TSE's contribution explains: "T. S. Eliot, the poet and author, visited Stockholm and the university towns of Upsala, Lund, Stockholm and Gothenburg in 1942. Prevented, like so many other Englishmen, from travelling by the war, this was his first visit abroad since its outbreak. His speech was made at the Anglo-Swedish luncheon on March 18, 1943" (15).

TSE's address resulted from a chance meeting on a railway platform in July 1942 – about two months after his return from Sweden – with a cousin of his friend Christina Morley, Lady Cecilia Sempill. Her husband, Lord Sempill, chaired the Anglo-Swedish Society, whose primary goal was "To promote social and intellectual intercourse between the peoples of the British Empire and Sweden" (23).

2. "Plattdeutsch" (Low German) refers to the language once predominant – and still spoken, though by dwindling numbers – in northern Germany and the adjoining areas of the Netherlands; TSE has in mind the culture of the region. *Entrepôt*: "A commercial centre; a place to which goods are brought for distribution to various parts of the world" (OED).

3. I.e., *Bonniers litterära magasin*, an important Swedish literary-critical journal published since 1932 in Stockholm. TSE had met its publishers, the Bonnier family, as well as its editor, Georg Svensson, during his 1942 visit to Sweden.

4. The introduction to *Friendship, Progress, Civilisation*, written by Eric Swenne, includes the following impression of TSE's lecture: "Mr. T. S. Eliot . . . looked at something more than Sweden. There was Europe and, to his sensitive and farseeing mind, the whole question of civilisation. He felt that the basic element of all civilisation is *exchange* of goods, spiritual as

well as material. . . . If London is to be of the great *entrepôts* of culture for Europe, 'it is no good putting another people in a position to understand us better unless we are also going to make the effort to understand them.' With these words the poet again lifted our gaze to the future" (4).

Writing this paper was "not an easy task," TSE confessed to Herbert Read on 22 Mar 1943; "it took me two days to prepare." After the lecture, he reported to John Hayward on 26 Mar that "the Swedes professed to be pleased, and said 'you have given us (i.e. the Anglo-S. Society) our charter.' That rather frightened me."

The Approach to James Joyce[1]

The Listener, 30 (14 Oct 1943) 446-47

James Joyce was born in Dublin in 1882. He was educated in Jesuit schools in Ireland, and pursued his studies later in Paris and elsewhere in Europe. Except for a few visits, in later years, to England, he spent the whole of his adult life on the Continent. For some years he earned his living as a teacher of English at a language school in Trieste, which was then a part of Austria. He was highly gifted for acquiring foreign languages: he learned French as a student in Paris; in Trieste he acquired a fluent knowledge of German and Italian; at home, to the end of his life, he spoke Italian with his children. Later in Switzerland, he learned to speak one or two German-Swiss dialects; with Latin his Jesuit education had made him very familiar, and he gained a reading knowledge of other languages as well. I emphasise his interest in languages as well as in literatures: for his passionate interest in words, and his wide acquaintance with the languages of Europe, give some clue to the understanding of his later work.

Early in the last war he removed from Trieste to Switzerland, and after the end of the war he transferred himself and his family to Paris, where he made his home for the rest of his life. After the middle of 1940 we had little news of him, until the bare information of his death in Switzerland was announced. Throughout his life he had suffered from a very serious ailment of the eyes: an affliction which gave him periods of the most intense pain, and at times rendered him almost totally blind. He had had several operations, under a distinguished ophthalmic surgeon in Zurich. I can only suppose that it was a recurrence of this trouble which had taken him back to Switzerland.[2]

I draw attention to this eye-trouble and the partial blindness which it brought about, not merely as a biographical fact, but because I think it has a bearing on his later writing. Joyce was a very sociable man: the frequent necessity of going for long periods to the places where he could get the best treatment meant isolation from society. He was an observant man; the partial blindness robbed him of his visual experience, and helps to account for the fact that in all his chief works he draws upon memories of his youth in Ireland. But a blind man can still hear. We can draw a certain parallel between Joyce and John Milton. Both lost their sight, and had to have people read to them; and both were musicians. Joyce had a very fine voice, and had had operatic training: had he not chosen literature, he would certainly have become a professional singer. The combination of great musical gifts with blindness seems to have resulted, in the later work of both men, in writing which makes its strongest appeal to the ear, and which gives you very little to see. Joyce's last book has to be read aloud, preferably by an Irish voice; and, as the one gramophone record which he made attests, no other voice could read it, not even another Irish voice, as well as Joyce could read it himself. This is a limitation which has made more slow the appreciation and enjoyment of his last book.

The four important books on which Joyce's reputation depends are *Dubliners* (a volume of short stories), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.[3] There are also a small number of short lyrical poems, and a prose play, *Exiles*.[4] *Exiles* is an immature work: I have never seen it performed, and so cannot judge of its theatrical value; but I think that its chief interest is as evidence of the profound influence upon Joyce, as a young man, of the plays of Henrik Ibsen. His devotion to Ibsen was so great that it impelled him to learn Norwegian, so as to read these plays in the original language. I think it was his desire to emulate Ibsen, rather than any enduring interest in the art of the theatre, which moved him to write this play. The poems are slight, graceful,[5†] conventional, and of very good workmanship; and they are the work of a man who conceived a lyric poem as something to be set to music. Neither the play nor the poems give any evidence of great originality. It is in *Dubliners* that his powers as a writer are first apparent.

I have spoken of four important books: it is necessary to say something about each of them; because we need to read the first two in order to understand the third, and then the third before we can make head or tail of the fourth. *Dubliners* is the easiest to read: it is a collection of short stories, or sketches, of Dublin life and Irish characters. Some of the episodes are seen through the eyes of himself as a small boy, some are objective drawings of character. The style is mostly simple, bare, and straightforward: Joyce had studied the great French novelists and short-story writers of the nineteenth century. He writes with a realism of a degree exceptional in English writing of the period before the last war, and unique in description of Irish life by an Irishman. The finest, and the longest, of them is called "The Dead." But it was his next book, the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which made his reputation. This book, mostly written while he was living in Trieste, is, as the title indicates, an account of his own boyhood and adolescence in Dublin, his schooldays, his emotional and intellectual experiences, his religious doubts and discussions with the priests who saw in him a possible candidate for the priesthood, and his final decision to discover his own vocation alone and in voluntary exile. As a record it is extremely moving, but it is a good deal more. It is the first realisation of a highly original style of writing: saying many things that other writers would leave unspoken, and omitting much detail that other writers would think it necessary to put in. It is a style at once bare and simple, and capable of great poetic intensity and suggestiveness. Joyce had a remarkable knowledge of English literature, and an extremely retentive memory. He had studied and assimilated many styles. In the *Portrait* there are traces of the writers who had influenced him: writers as different as Jonathan Swift, Cardinal Newman and Walter Pater. And, being an Irishman, he was at the same time more detached from the traditions of English writing than most English writers; his standards were European. He was furthermore – and this isolates him further from the English tradition – a Roman Catholic who had had the peculiar mental discipline of a Jesuit school. And he was a Roman Catholic who had abandoned his faith; at the same time very much in that European tradition, and a rebel against it.

In the *Portrait*, moreover, he gains for the first time a universality of which there are only traces in *Dubliners*. His portrait of himself is at the same time a portrait of universal adolescence. This was his method. His was an intensely egocentric personality. He did not compose a novel through direct interest in, and sympathy with, other human beings, but by enlarging his own consciousness so as to include them. In his next book he did create a great character, Leopold Bloom, for whom Ulysses is a symbol. But he did this by introducing himself – the same Stephen Dedalus who is the hero of the *Portrait* – and he creates Bloom as a counterpart, an opposite to himself.

Ulysses, his third important book, and his most famous, took a long time to write, and was talked about for a long time before it appeared. When it came out, in 1922, it became the most talked about book for a good ten years. Its notoriety was partly due to its scarcity. It used words which had never appeared in respectable print before, and it described scenes, both in real life and in the imagination of its characters, which had never been described before. But those who were competent to judge knew that it was also a great, as well as a revolutionary, book. It is a big book, yet it is the account of events in the lives of certain characters during one single day in Dublin. It is divided into twelve parts, each written in a different and appropriate style, and each corresponding to one part of Homer's *Odyssey*. The adventures of Homer's hero occupied ten years; Joyce's hero has his parallel adventures in a single day. When I first read this book it seemed to me, as it did to nearly everyone else, a tremendous experience, but very difficult reading. Ten years later I read it through again without the slightest weariness. Now it seems to me to present no difficulty at all. So often it happens, with any work of art that is really new and original, that it seems hard to understand merely because it is unfamiliar; and when in time we say we have come to understand it, we mean merely that we have got used to it.

Ulysses seemed so epoch-making, and so final, that people wondered whether Joyce would ever be able to write anything more, or whether he ought even to try. And when sections of *Finnegans Wake* began to appear, in a periodical in Paris, they seemed so mad and unintelligible, that all but Joyce's most devoted admirers began to say that he had gone too far.[6] When the whole book was published, in 1939 – and it is a very long book, too – it failed to make the same impression that *Ulysses* had made. For most people found it too much trouble to read, and preferred to believe that it was not worth that trouble. You do have to work, in order to become at ease with the peculiar idiom and the strange vocabulary of words invented out of a dozen languages. Even to give you some notion of the style of the writing would take more time than I dispose of today. To explain how to read it would [require] a dozen talks; and I don't think that I myself am yet qualified to give them. I will say only that I believe it to be at least as great a work as *Ulysses*, and that is a great book indeed. I have purposely given my time to the earlier work, because that is the necessary approach. Don't try to read *Finnegans Wake* until you have read *Ulysses*; don't read *Ulysses* until you find you enjoy the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; and read *Dubliners* first of all. That is the only possible way of coming to understand the work of one of the great writers, not of our own time only, but of all European literature.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. George Orwell, Talks Producer for the Indian Section of the BBC, wrote to TSE on 17 June 1943, inviting him to give a talk on Joyce for the "Modern Men of Letters" series. TSE sent

a draft to Orwell on 18 Aug, saying that "it really is an impossible task . . . to give any clear account of Joyce's work in this space, especially when one has aimed at an audience unfamiliar with the Irish mind." The talk was broadcast on 26 Sept 1943 – TSE's fifty-fifth birthday – over the BBC's Eastern Service, Indian Programme.

2. Dr. Alfred Vogt had been Joyce's ocular surgeon since 1930. It was not Joyce's eyes, however, but life in Vichy France that drove him, with his family, back to Zurich. He died there on 13 Jan 1941 from complications following intestinal surgery.

3. *Dubliners* (London: Grant Richards, 1914); *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916); *Ulysses* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1922); *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939). A critical champion of Joyce since he read *Portrait* and *Ulysses* in serial form, TSE reviewed *Ulysses* in 1923 (2.476), lectured on the above works in English 26 at Harvard in 1933 (4.785-90), and more recently edited and introduced the Faber edition of *Introducing James Joyce: A Selection of Joyce's Prose* in 1942 (6.329).

4. *Exiles* (London: Grant Richards, 1918). Joyce published two collections of poems – *Chamber Music* (1907) and *Pomes Penyeach* (1927) – as well as a few uncollected lyrics.

5†. The word "graceful" has been restored to the *Listener* text from TSE's broadcast script of 26 Sept 1943 (Caversham).

6. The Paris-based journal *transition*, edited by Joyce's friend Eugene Jolas, published excerpts from *Finnegans Wake* (then called *Work in Progress*) between 1927 and 1938.

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times, 126 (22 Oct 1943) 543

Sir, – In your review of Mr. F. C. Happold's *Towards a New Aristocracy*, in your issue of October 8, it is stated that "the conviction of Mr. T. S. Eliot is shared that a Christian society in these days cannot ask much more than the acceptance of the Christian ethic and outlook, and fears are expressed that an insistence on Christian dogma in school would be to lose all."[1]

As for what Mr. Happold believes, he can speak for himself; and he would have no reason to thank me for volunteering to interpret his words. But if he holds this conviction, it is not one that he shares with me; and your reviewer's understanding of what I said is very different from what I meant to say. I do not believe that there is any stability in a "Christian ethic" divorced from Christian faith; and as for a Christian outlook, apart from Christian faith, I do not know what it is.

For my "Christian Society," I was asking no more, and no less, of the majority of people, than what they were capable of in the so-called "ages of faith." When I spoke of Christian *behaviour*, I was concerned with the level at which people hardly think at all, not with the level at which they think wrong: I did not couple Christian behaviour with conscious repudiation of Christian faith.[2]

The effect of your reviewer's reference to myself is to give the impression that I am a sectary of British Christianity.

T. S. ELIOT

Shamley Green, Surrey

NOTES

1. "The Religious Motive," published in the *Church Times*, 126 (8 Oct 1943), praises Happold's book as being "of outstanding interest" but criticizes the view he is alleged to share with TSE: "Like others who accept this limitation, [Happold] does not seem to have considered fully the fact that the present Christian ethic in society is living on an inherited capital of dogmatic teaching" (517).

The English educator and author Frederick Crossfield Happold (1893-1971) was headmaster of Bishop Wordsworth's Church of England Grammar School for Boys in Salisbury, where in 1935 he founded the "Company of Service and Honour" (68-69), an elite cohort of student leaders, visionaries, and innovators elected to form an intellectual aristocracy in a new "Christian Community" for the future of England. His *Towards a New Aristocracy: A Contribution to*

Educational Planning was published by Faber & Faber in 1943. The book argues for government by an elite of specialists – "the technician, the scientist, the sociologist" – who are trained to handle the increasingly complex "problems of social organization and government" (26). Happold also contends that a revival of Christianity is necessary to reestablish a secure value system (34-39). However, he considers it "possible that only a minority can apprehend the higher forms of the religious life, that for many it must remain primarily a matter of values and ethics" (34). In developing this point Happold cites *ICS* and borrows some of TSE's language.

2. In *ICS*, TSE writes: "In the Christian Community . . . the Christian faith would be ingrained, but it requires, as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behaviour; and it is only from the much smaller number of conscious human beings, the Community of Christians, that one would expect a conscious Christian life on its highest social level. . . . For the great mass of humanity . . . as their capacity for *thinking* about the objects of faith is small, their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour: both in their customary and periodic religious observances, and in a traditional code of behaviour towards their neighbours" (5.697).

Twenty-Five Years in Gloucester Road[1]

The Church Times, 126 (29 Oct 1943) 559

The first Sunday (October 24) of the dedication festival of St. Stephen's, Gloucester Road, was chosen for the presentation to the vicar, the Rev. E. S. Cheetham, of a gift to which more than four-hundred members of his congregation and other friends had contributed.[2] The occasion commemorated Mr. Cheetham's twenty-five years of service in this parish.[3†]

Lord Sankey, making the presentation after High Mass, paid a moving tribute to Mr. Cheetham's services to the church, the parish and the congregation during these twenty-five years.[4] He congratulated St. Stephen's on the devotion, toil and courage of its vicar, through which it had maintained its daily offices for a large congregation, and its ministrations to individuals, throughout the most difficult period of the war – mentioning also the vicar's success in preserving the church's financial stability during this period, at the same time adding to the endowment fund, for which he has already collected over £6,000. [Lord Sankey touched also upon Fr. Cheetham's care for the arts, and upon his literary gifts, as shown by his collection of essays and by the high quality of the parish magazine.[5]

The great majority of those present at High Mass remained to hear Lord Sankey's address, and Fr. Cheetham's reply of thanks.]

NOTES

1. Subtitled "Presentation to a Parish Priest." On 25 Oct 1943 TSE sent this notice to the *Church Times*, explaining: "I enclose a brief account which I have composed of the occasion of the presentation last Sunday to Father Cheetham of St. Stephen's, Gloucester Road, in commemoration of his twenty-five years at that church. If you have had no official report of this ceremony, I thought that you might care to use this either as it stands or reduced or edited by yourself in your current issue. It is needless to say that it would be a great pleasure to myself and to Father Cheetham's friends to have this ceremony reported in your columns." Sentences deleted from the end of TSE's report before publication in the *Church Times* are restored in brackets.

2. Eric Samuel Cheetham (1892-1957) was curate at St. Stephen's from 1917 to 1929, when he became vicar. TSE was a regular worshipper at St. Stephen's from 1933, after his return from the United States, until his death; he was churchwarden there from 1934 to 1959. TSE was also Cheetham's tenant for seven years, first in the church presbytery and then in a flat.

3†. In the TS, "parish – first as curate to Lord Victor Seymour, and since 1929 as Vicar."

4. John Sankey, Viscount Sankey (1866-1948), jurist and Labour politician, served as Lord Chancellor 1929-35. He was an active Anglo-Catholic.

5. Sankey refers to *The Collection* (ca. 1942), a series of autobiographical meditations – most connected with his life as a parish priest, many reflecting the conditions of life during the war – that Cheetham published from the Vestry, St. Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road.

The Social Function of Poetry[1*]

The title of this essay is so likely to suggest different things to different people, that I may be excused for explaining first what I do not mean by it before going on to try to explain what I do mean. When we speak of the "function" of anything we are likely to be thinking of what that thing *ought* to do rather than of what it does do or has done. That is an important distinction, because I do not intend to talk about what I think poetry *ought* to do. People who tell us what poetry ought to do, especially if they are poets themselves, usually have in mind the particular kind of poetry that they would like to write. It is always possible, of course, that poetry may have a different task in the future from what it has had in the past; but even if that is so, it is worth while to decide first what function it has had in the past, both at one time or another in one language or another, and universally. I could easily write about what I do with poetry myself, or what I should like to do, and then try to persuade you that this is exactly what all good poets have tried to do, or ought to have done, in the past – only they have not succeeded completely, but perhaps that is not their fault. But it seems to me probable that if poetry – and I mean *all* great poetry – has had no social function in the past, it is not likely to have any in the future.

When I say *all* great poetry I mean to avoid another way in which I might treat the subject. One might take up the various kinds of poetry, one after another, and discuss the social function of each kind in turn without reaching the general question of what is the function of poetry as poetry. I want to distinguish between the general and particular functions, so that we shall know what we are not talking about. Poetry may have a deliberate, conscious social purpose. In its more primitive forms this purpose is often quite clear. There are, for example, early runes and chants, some of which had very practical magical purposes – to avert the evil eye, to cure some disease, or to propitiate some demon. Poetry is early used in religious ritual, and when we sing a hymn we are still using poetry for a particular social purpose. The early forms of epic and saga may have transmitted what was held to be history before surviving for communal entertainment only; and before the use of written language a regular verse form must have been extremely helpful to the memory[2†] – and the memory of primitive bards, story-tellers and scholars must have been prodigious. In more advanced societies, such as that of ancient Greece, the recognized social functions of poetry are also very conspicuous. The Greek drama develops out of religious rites, and remains a formal public ceremony associated with traditional religious celebrations; the pindaric ode develops in relation to a particular social occasion.[3] Certainly, these definite uses of poetry gave poetry a framework which made possible the attainment of perfection in particular kinds.

In more modern poetry some of these forms remain, such as that of the religious hymn which I have mentioned. The meaning of the term *didactic* poetry has undergone some change. *Didactic* may mean "conveying information," or it may mean "giving moral instruction," or it may mean something which comprehends both. Virgil's *Georgics*, for instance, are very beautiful poetry, and contain some very sound information about good farming. But it would seem impossible, at the present day, to write an up-to-date book about farming which should also be fine poetry: for one thing the subject itself has become much more complicated and scientific; and for another, it can be handled more readily in prose. Nor should we, as the Romans did, write astronomical and cosmological treatises in verse. The poem, the ostensible aim of which is to convey information, has been superseded by prose. Didactic poetry has gradually become limited to poetry of moral exhortation, or poetry which aims to *persuade* the reader to the author's point of view about something. It therefore includes a great deal of what can be called *satire*, though satire overlaps with burlesque and parody, the purpose of which is primarily to cause mirth. Some of Dryden's poems, in the seventeenth century, are satires in the sense that they aim to ridicule the objects against which they are directed, and also didactic in the aim to persuade the reader to a particular political or religious point of view; and in doing this they also make use of the allegorical method of disguising reality as fiction: *The Hind and the Panther*, which aims to persuade the reader that right was on the side of the Church of Rome against the Church of England, is his most remarkable poem in this kind.[4] In the nineteenth century a good deal of the poetry of Shelley is inspired by a zeal for social and political reforms.[5†]

As for *dramatic* poetry, that has a social function of a kind now peculiar to itself. For whereas most poetry to-day is written to be read in solitude, or to be read aloud in a small company, dramatic verse alone has as its function the making an immediate, collective impression upon a large number of people gathered together to look at an imaginary episode acted upon a stage. Dramatic poetry is different from any other, but as its special laws are those of the drama its function is merged into that of the drama in general, and I am not here concerned with the special social function of the drama.

As for the special function of philosophical poetry, that would involve an analysis and an historical account of some length. I have, I think, already mentioned enough kinds of poetry to make clear that the special function of each is related to some other function: of dramatic poetry to drama, of didactic poetry of information to the function of its various subject-matter, of didactic poetry of philosophy or religion or politics or morals to the function of these subjects.[6†] We might consider the function of any of these kinds of poetry and still leave untouched the question of the function of *poetry*. For all these things can he dealt with in prose.

But before proceeding I want to dismiss one objection that may be raised. People sometimes are suspicious of any poetry that has a particular purpose: poetry in which the poet is advocating social, moral, political or religious views. And they are much more inclined to say that it isn't poetry when they dislike the particular views; just as other people often think that something is real poetry because it happens to express a point of view which they like. I should say that the question of whether the poet is using his poetry to advocate or attack a social attitude does not matter. Bad verse may have a transient vogue when the poet is reflecting a popular attitude of the moment; but real poetry survives not only a change of popular opinion but the complete extinction of interest in the issues with which the poet was passionately concerned. Lucretius' poem remains a great poem, though his notions of physics and astronomy are discredited;[7] Dryden's, though the political quarrels of the seventeenth century no longer concern us; just as a great poem of the past may still give great pleasure, though its subject-matter is one which we should now treat in prose.

Now if we are to find the essential social function of poetry we must look first at its more obvious functions, those which it must perform if it is to perform any. The first, I think, that we can be sure about is that poetry has to give pleasure. If you ask what kind of pleasure then I can only answer, the kind of pleasure that poetry gives: simply because any other answer would take us far afield into aesthetics, and the general question of the nature of art.

I suppose it will be agreed that every good poet, whether he be a great poet or not, has something to give us besides pleasure: for if it were only pleasure, the pleasure itself could not be of the highest kind. Beyond any specific intention which poetry may have, such as I have already instanced in the various kinds of poetry, there is always the communication of some new experience, or some fresh understanding of the familiar, or the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for, which enlarges our consciousness or refines our sensibility. But it is not with such individual benefit from poetry, any more than it is with the quality of individual pleasure, that this paper is concerned. We all understand, I think, both the kind of pleasure which poetry can give, and the kind of difference, beyond the pleasure, which it makes to our lives. Without producing these two effects it simply is not poetry. We may acknowledge this, but at the same time overlook something which it does for us collectively, as a society. And I mean that in the widest sense. For I think it is important that every people should have its own poetry, not simply for those who enjoy poetry – such people could always learn other languages and enjoy their poetry – but because it actually makes a difference to the society as a whole, and that means to people who do not enjoy poetry. I include even those who do not know the names of their own national poets. That is the real subject of this paper.

We observe that poetry differs from every other art in having a value for the people of the poet's race and language,[8†] which it can have for no other. It is true that even music and painting have a local and racial character: but certainly the difficulties of appreciation in these arts, for a foreigner, are much less. It is true on the other hand that prose writings have significance in their own language which is lost in translation; but we all feel that we lose much less in reading a novel in translation than in reading a poem; and in a translation of some kinds of scientific work the loss may be virtually nil. That poetry is much more local than prose can be seen in the history of European languages. Through the Middle Ages to within a few hundred years ago Latin remained the language for philosophy, theology, and science. The impulse towards the literary use of the languages of the peoples began with poetry. And this appears perfectly natural when we realize that poetry has primarily to do with the expression of feeling and emotion; and that feeling and emotion are particular, whereas thought is general. It is easier to think in a foreign language than it is to feel in it. Therefore no art is more stubbornly national than poetry. A people may have its language taken away from it, suppressed, and another language compelled upon the schools; but unless you teach that people to *feel* in a new language, you have not eradicated the old one, and it will reappear in poetry, which is the vehicle of feeling. I have just said "feel in a new language," and I mean something more than merely "express their feelings in a new language." A thought expressed in a different language may be practically the same thought, but a feeling or emotion expressed in a different language is not the same feeling or emotion. One of the reasons for learning at least one foreign language well is that we acquire a kind of supplementary personality; one of the reasons for not acquiring a new language *instead* of our own is that most of us do not want[9†] to become a different person. A superior language can seldom be exterminated except by the extermination of the people who speak it. When one language supersedes another it is usually because that language has advantages which commend it, and which offer not merely a difference but a wider and more refined range, not only for thinking but for feeling, than the more primitive language.

Emotion and feeling, then, are best expressed in the common language of the people – that is, in the language common to all classes: the structure, the rhythm, the sound, the idiom of a language, express the personality of the people which speaks it. When I say that it is poetry rather than prose that is concerned with the expression[10†] of emotion and feeling, I do not mean that poetry need have no intellectual content or meaning, or that great poetry does not contain more of such meaning than lesser poetry. But to develop this investigation would take me away from my immediate purpose. I will take it as agreed that people find the most conscious expression of their deepest feelings in the poetry of their own language rather than in any other art or in the poetry of other languages. This does not mean, of course, that true poetry is limited to feelings which everyone can recognize and understand; we must not limit poetry to *popular* poetry. It is enough that in a homogeneous people the feelings of the most refined and complex have something in common with those of the most crude and simple, which they have not in common with those of people of their own level speaking another language. And, when a civilization is healthy, the great poet will have something to say to his fellow countrymen at every level of education.

We may say that the duty of the poet, as poet, is only indirectly to his people: his direct duty is to his *language*, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve. In expressing what other people feel he is also changing the feeling by making it more conscious; he is making people more aware of what they feel already, and therefore teaching them something about themselves. But he is not merely a more conscious person than the others; he is also individually different from other people, and from other poets too, and can make his readers share consciously in new feelings which they had not experienced before. That is the difference between the writer who is merely eccentric or mad and the genuine poet. The former may have feelings which are unique but which cannot be shared, and are therefore useless; the latter discovers new variations of sensibility which can be appropriated by others. And in expressing them he is developing and enriching the language which he speaks.

I have said quite enough about the impalpable differences of feeling between one people and another, differences which are affirmed in, and developed by, their different languages. But people do not only experience the world differently in different places, they experience it differently at different times. In fact, our sensibility is constantly changing, as the world about us changes: ours is not the same as that of the Chinese or the Hindu, but also it is not the same as that of our ancestors several hundred years ago. It is not the same as that of our fathers; and finally, we ourselves are not quite the same persons that we were a year ago. This is obvious; but what is not so obvious is that this is the reason why we cannot afford to *stop* writing poetry. Most educated people take a certain pride in the great authors of their language, though they may never read them, just as they are proud of any other distinction of their country: a few authors even become celebrated enough to be mentioned occasionally in political speeches. But most people do not realize that this is not enough; that unless they go on producing great authors, and especially great poets, their language will deteriorate, their culture will deteriorate and perhaps become absorbed in a stronger one.

One point is, of course, that if we have no living literature we shall become more and more alienated from the literature of the past; unless we keep up continuity, our literature of the past will become more and more remote from us until it is as strange to us as the literature of a foreign people. For our language goes on changing; our way of life changes, under the pressure of material changes in our environment in all sorts of ways; and unless we have those few men who combine an exceptional sensibility with an exceptional power over words, our own ability, not merely to express, but even to feel any but the crudest emotions, will degenerate.

It matters little whether a poet had a large audience in his own time. What matters is that there should always be at least a small audience for him in every generation. Yet what I have just said suggests that his importance is for his own time, or that dead poets cease to be of any use to us unless we have living poets as well. I would even press my first point and say that if a poet gets a large audience very quickly, that is a rather suspicious circumstance: for it leads us to fear that he is not really doing anything new, that he is only giving people what they are already used to, and therefore what they have already had from the poets of the previous generation. But that a poet should have the right, small audience in his own time *is* important. There should always be a small vanguard of people, appreciative of poetry, who are independent and somewhat in advance of their time or ready to assimilate novelty more quickly. The development of culture does not mean bringing everybody up to the front, which amounts to no more than making everyone keep step: it means the maintenance of such an *élite*, with the main, and more passive body of readers not lagging more than a generation or so behind. The changes and developments of sensibility which appear first in a few will work themselves into the language gradually, through their influence on other, and more readily popular authors; and by the time they have become well established, a new advance will be called for. It is, moreover, through the living authors that the dead remain alive. A poet like Shakespeare has influenced the English language very deeply, not only by his influence on his immediate successors. For the greatest poets have aspects which do not come to light at once; and by exercising a direct influence on other poets centuries later, they continue to affect the living language. Indeed, if an English poet is to learn how to use words in our time, he must devote close study to those who have used them best in *their* time; to those who, in their own day, have made the language new.

So far I have only suggested the final point to which I think the influence of poetry may be said to extend; and that can be put best by the assertion that, in the long run, it makes a difference to the speech, to the sensibility, to the lives of all the members of a society, to all the members of the community, to the whole people, whether they read and enjoy poetry or not: even, in fact, whether they know the names of their greatest poets or not. The influence of poetry, at the furthest periphery, is of course very diffused, very indirect, and very difficult to prove. It is like following the course of a bird or an aeroplane in a clear sky: if you have seen it when it was quite near, and kept your eye on it as it flew farther and farther away, you can still see it at a great distance, a distance at which the eye of another person, to whom you try to point it out, will be unable to find it. So, if you follow the influence of poetry, through those readers who are most affected by it, to those people who never read at all, you will find it present everywhere. At least you will find it if the national culture is living and healthy, for in a healthy society there is a continuous reciprocal influence and interaction of each part upon the others. And this is what I mean by the social function of poetry in its largest sense: that it does, in proportion to its excellence and vigour, affect the speech and the sensibility of the whole nation.

You must not imagine me to be saying that the language which we speak is determined exclusively by our poets. The structure of culture is much more complex than that. Indeed it will equally be true that the quality of our poetry is dependent upon the way in which the people use their language: for a poet must take as his material his own language as it is actually spoken around him. If it is improving, he will profit; if it is deteriorating, he must make the best of it. Poetry can to some extent preserve, and even restore, the beauty of a language; it can and should also help it to develop, to be just as subtle and precise in the more complicated conditions and for the changing purposes of modern life, as it was in and for a simpler age. But poetry, like every other single element in that mysterious social personality which we call our "culture," must be dependent upon a great many circumstances which are beyond its control.

This leads me to a few after-thoughts of a more general nature. My emphasis to this point has been upon the national and local function of poetry; and this must be qualified. I do not wish to leave the impression that the function of poetry is to divide people from people, for I do not believe that the cultures of the several peoples of Europe can flourish in isolation from each other. There have been, no doubt, in the past, high civilizations producing great art, thought and literature, which have developed in isolation. Of that I cannot speak with assurance, for some of them may not have been so isolated as at first appears. But in the history of Europe this has not been so. Even Ancient Greece owed much to Egypt, and something to the Asiatic frontiers; and in the relations of the Greek states to each other, with their different dialects and different manners, we may find a reciprocal influence and stimulus analogous to that of the countries of Europe upon each other. But the history of European literature will not show that any has been independent of the others; rather that there has been a constant give and take, and that each has in turn, from time to time, been revitalized by stimulation from outside. A general *autarky* in culture simply will not work: the hope of perpetuating the culture of any country lies in communication with others. But if separation of cultures within the unity of Europe is a danger, so also would be a unification which led to uniformity. The variety is as essential as the unity. For instance, there is much to be said, for certain limited purposes, for a universal *lingua franca* such as Esperanto or Basic English.[11] But supposing that all communication between nations was carried on in such an artificial language, how imperfect it would be! Or rather, it would be wholly adequate in some respects, and there would be a complete lack of communication in others. Poetry is a constant reminder of all the things that can only be said in one language, and are untranslatable. The *spiritual* communication between people and people cannot be carried on without the individuals who take the trouble to learn at least one foreign language as well as one can learn any language but one's own, and who consequently are able, to a greater or less degree, to *feel* in another language as well as in their own. And one's understanding of another people, in this way, needs to be supplemented by the understanding of those individuals among that people who have gone to the pains to learn one's own language.

Incidentally, the study of another people's poetry is peculiarly instructive. I have said that there are qualities of the poetry of every language, which only those to whom the language is native can understand. But there is another side to this too. I have sometimes found, in trying to read a language which I did not know very well, that I did not understand a piece of prose until I understood it according to the standards of the school teacher: that is, I had to be sure of the meaning of every word, grasp the grammar and syntax, and then I could think the passage out in English. But I have also found sometimes that a piece of poetry, which I could not translate, containing many words unfamiliar to me, and sentences which I could not construe, conveyed something immediate and vivid,[12†] which was unique, different from anything in English – something which I could not put into words and yet felt that I understood. And on learning that language better I found that this impression was not an illusion, not something which I imagined to be in the poetry, but something that was really there. So in poetry you can, now and then, penetrate into another country, so to speak, before your passport has been issued or your ticket taken.

The whole question of the relation of countries of different language but related culture, within the ambit of Europe, is therefore one into which we are led, perhaps unexpectedly, by inquiring into the social function of poetry. I certainly do not intend to pass from this point into purely political questions; but I could wish that those who are concerned with political questions would more often cross the frontier into these which I have been considering. For these give the spiritual aspect of problems the material aspect of which is the concern of politics. On my side of the line one is concerned with living things which have their own laws of growth, which are not always reasonable, but must just be accepted by the reason: things which cannot be neatly planned and put into order any more than the winds and the rains and the seasons can be disciplined.

If, finally, I am right in believing that poetry has a "social function" for the whole of the people of the poet's language, whether they are aware of his existence or not, it follows that it matters to each people of Europe that the others should continue to have poetry. I cannot read Norwegian poetry, but if I were told that no more poetry was being written in the Norwegian language I should feel an alarm which would be much more than generous sympathy. I should regard it as a spot of malady which was likely to spread over the whole Continent; the beginning of a decline which would mean that people everywhere would cease to be able to express, and consequently be able to feel, the emotions of civilized beings. This of course might happen. Much has been said everywhere about the decline of religious belief; not so much notice has been taken of the decline of religious sensibility. The trouble of the modern age is not merely the inability to believe certain things about God and man which our forefathers believed, but the inability to *feel* towards God and man as they did. A belief in which you no longer believe is something which to some extent you can still understand; but when religious feeling disappears, the words in which men have struggled to express it become meaningless. It is true that religious feeling varies naturally from country to country, and from age to age, just as poetic feeling does; the feeling varies, even when the belief, the doctrine, remains the same. But this is a condition of human life, and what I am apprehensive of is death. It is equally possible that the feeling for poetry, and the feelings which are the material of poetry, may disappear everywhere: which might perhaps help to facilitate that unification of the world which some people consider desirable for its own sake.

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "An address delivered at the British-Norwegian Institute in 1943 and subsequently developed for delivery to an audience in Paris in 1945. It later appeared in *The Adelphi*." As printed in *OPP*; originally published in *Norseman*, 1 (Nov 1943), 449-57. The table of contents in *OPP* gives 1945 as the date of the essay. In fact, however, the piece reprinted in *OPP* is substantially identical to the 1943 version, while the lecture given in Paris and published in the *Adelphi* (6.639) is a quite distinct piece that overlaps only occasionally with the present text.

Originally scheduled for 23 Feb 1943 but postponed because of a late-announced speech by King Haakon, TSE's address to the British-Norwegian Institute was given on 6 Apr at the Hyde Park Hotel. TSE reused his lecture on 19 Apr at the Czech House in Edinburgh, where, at the behest of Edwin Muir, he spoke under the auspices of the British Council.

2†. In *Norseman*: "the verbal memory"

3. The Cambridge anthropologists, by whom TSE was much influenced, traced the origins of Attic drama to prehistoric ritual practices; in the classical era, the plays continued to be performed at the annual festival honoring the god Dionysus. Pindar's *epinikia*, or "victory odes," celebrate athletic achievements in the contests held at the four major Panhellenic festivals.

4. In "Dryden the Poet" (1931), TSE quotes *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) and states that "for the first time and for the last is political-religious controversy elevated to the condition of poetry. . . . [O]ne cannot but appreciate the characterisation of the Church of England, under the guise of the Panther, which Dryden draws, after his conversion to Rome" (4.269).

5†. In *Norseman*: "for particular social and political reforms."

6†. In *Norseman*: "of didactic poetry of religion or politics or morals to the function of these subjects, of didactic poetry of philosophy to philosophy"

7. The first two books of *De rerum natura* set out Lucretius's version of Epicurean physics, while the last two focus on cosmology.

8†. In *Norseman*: "the poet's race"

9†. In *Norseman*: "nobody really wants"

10†. In *Norseman*: "analysis and expression"

11. Esperanto, an international language developed by L. L. Zamenhof (1887); and Basic English, a simplified form of English developed by Charles Kay Ogden (1930).

12†. In *Norseman*: "vivid as a sensation"

Reunion by Destruction: Reflections on a Scheme for Church Union in South India: Addressed to the Laity

London: The Council for the Defence of Church Principles, 1943.[1] Pp. 21.

The reader into whose hands this pamphlet has come, will, I hope, have had two questions in his mind: and I hope that these two questions have stimulated a curiosity which I shall endeavour to satisfy. The first question is, of what concern is this subject to me? and the second, why is this writer concerned with this subject? It is precisely the person who asks these questions, who is the reader to whom the following pages are primarily addressed. He is the reader who is not aware of any reason why the proceedings of a few Christian bodies in South India should be either his business or mine. To answer one of those questions is to answer both.

I am writing as an Anglican layman to the laity. I might not have heard of the affair of South India, or not have noted its importance; and it is because I believe that the majority of laypeople have not heard of it, or have given it no attention, that I am writing. I should like to make clear that I am not writing for the smaller number of church people who are accustomed to take an interest either in theological discussion or in ecclesiastical affairs. I am not a theologian myself, and there is nothing in what follows, the apprehension of which requires any theological training on the part of the reader. I also wish to make abundantly clear that I am not writing particularly for Catholics or for Protestants. This is not a "party" issue: it is not a question as to whether the Church of England should move in a more Catholic, or in a more Protestant direction. It is a more vital question than that: it is the question whether the Church of England shall survive or perish. The reader whose attention I am most anxious to enlist, is the reader who would not call himself either Catholic or Protestant, whose mind does not move among theological subtleties, whose mind has been neither hardened by bigotry nor fortified by argument, whose mind is easily tolerant but obstinately Anglican; the reader who would not wish to see the Church of England transformed or made unfamiliar.

My business, accordingly, is first to put the reader in possession of a brief and impartial account of the facts of the Scheme for Church Union in South India.[2] I have then to show why the matter concerns him; then to show that the Scheme is fundamentally unsound; and finally to persuade the reader that its errors, in conjunction with others now current, would operate to produce effects which he would regret. It is not immediately obvious that events in places so remote as Tinevelly and Dornakal may have consequences in every parish in England.[3] But it is not possible to demonstrate the relevance until the reader is acquainted with the facts themselves; so I must ask his patience in perusing the next few pages. If he reads to the end, I do not think he can conclude that I have made a great fuss over nothing.

The Anglican dioceses in South India, which count among them a membership of about 500,000, are a part of the Anglican Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. It is proposed to detach these South Indian dioceses, and unite them to a new church of which the other components will be the existing South India United Church[4*] and the Methodist Church in South India. If the scheme is accepted by the several authorities, the result will be a single church composed of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists. It will not comprehend all the Christian bodies in South India: those remaining outside of it will be the Roman Catholic, the Baptist (American and Canadian), the Lutheran (American and Continental) and the three ancient Syrian Churches. It will be, however, a church numbering about a million adherents,[5*] and will have great significance as a more comprehensive Christian reunion than has ever been realised.

The debates leading up to the final Draft Constitution, which is now being considered, have been protracted and beset with difficulties.[6] The first discussions took place in 1919, in a conference composed of thirty-one Indians, one Englishman and one American. The attempt of this assembly to find a basis for reunion met with sympathy, as indeed it deserved, from the local Bishops. The first draft of a scheme was produced in 1929: it was criticised, on various grounds, from the various points of view which it endeavoured to reconcile.[7] The scheme in its present form, in which it is offered for acceptance, was completed in 1941. While it has been sharply criticised, and even denounced, by some Indian Christians, it is favoured by a majority of the people directly concerned.

Although the foundation of this proposed Church would necessitate the separation of the Anglican dioceses from the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, it is not to be regarded as a movement of *secession*. If it were, it would not concern us, however we might deplore it, in such a way as to justify this pamphlet. The aim is reunion: the members of the uniting bodies wish to remain in communion with the churches to which they at present belong. A member of the new Church in South India would expect, on visiting England, to enjoy the full privileges of whatever Church he belonged to before. That is among the special provisions which have been framed, governing the situation during the first thirty years, and which tolerate various irregularities which it is hoped will at the expiration of that time have disappeared. But it is not made clear what will be the status of the second generation – of those born and brought up in the new Church – in England.[8] It is hoped that the new Church will be on terms of inter-communion with the Church of England; the supporters of the scheme can hardly do less than expect that it will be on similar terms with the other English bodies represented on the foundation: so possibly an Indian Christian, born into the new Church, would, if he came to England, be entitled to the full privileges of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches here, all at once.[9] However this may be, the framers of the scheme hope that it will commend itself, both to the Free Churches, and to the Church of England, the Church of Wales, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and the Churches of the Anglican tradition in the United States and the Dominions. Obviously, a reunion in India, which separated India from Lambeth, would be a very doubtful gain for any of the bodies concerned;[10] for non-conformists in India to have accepted, with many misgivings and every possible limitation, episcopal government, and then to have their episcopate repudiated abroad, would prove a concession without adequate compensation.

While the realisation of the Scheme in India, therefore, is not contingent upon the general approval either of the Church of England or of the Anglican Churches elsewhere, it is possible that the attitude of those in India whose minds are not already confirmed to acceptance or rejection may be influenced by our views. For this reason, and because the question of inter-communion must eventually arise, and because of the inevitable effect of such a precedent upon movements towards reunion elsewhere, it behoves us to come to a judgment upon the merits of the Scheme for South India.

The evils which ensue upon Christian disunion are inevitably more manifest in the mission field than at home. In India they are more acute than elsewhere; both because the history of Christian evangelisation there is longer, and because of the other complications of religion, culture and race which have always disturbed that unhappy peninsula. The Syrian Church in India claims St. Thomas as its founder.[11] The first modern

European missionaries came with the Portuguese invasion and were followed by St. Francis Xavier.[12] German Protestant missionaries made their appearance early in the XVIII century. English missionary activity was late in starting; and the Church of England followed rather tardily the pioneers of dissent.[13] By the time that the whole of India had become attached to the British dominion, it must have been painfully apparent that the work of evangelisation to be done far exceeded the resources of any one Christian body, if not of all the bodies combined; and it appears to have been by common consent – whether tacit or explicit I do not know – that certain different bodies concentrated their attention upon different areas. This division of areas was very natural, and in a way commendable: but its consequences furnish one of the arguments most forcibly advanced by the promoters of the Scheme under consideration. "It became perfectly possible" – I quote from a pamphlet, *A Vital Issue*, published by the Church Missionary Society – "for three brothers working on the railway in different parts of India to come to Christ and then to discover on their meeting that one was an Anglican, one a Methodist, and one a Congregationalist, and that they could not meet together to express their common loyalty to Jesus Christ at the Holy Communion! It is fatally easy for Englishmen to minimize the shock of this discovery."[14]

I have no doubt that innumerable instances, of a variety of types, could be cited in further evidence of the ill effect, in India and upon Indians, of Christian division. But at this point we must exercise caution, and not allow our more generous feelings to overpower our judgment. That Christian workers in India should realise more fully, and lament with more passionate anxiety, the consequences of separation may seem natural: and in bearing witness of them they have much to tell us to which we should be most humbly attentive. We should be fired by their zeal and fervour; we should not abdicate our reason. First we may ask, are not the unfortunate consequences of Christian disunion in India, exactly what we should expect to follow, from Christian disunion in Europe? The presence of Protestant missionary bodies in Catholic countries in Europe, and of similar Catholic bodies in Protestant countries, seems to indicate that Christians are willing to proselytise each other: and if they believe their differences to be important, how could it be otherwise? We can hardly suppose that British Christian missionaries in India, having at last perceived the evils of sectarian dissention there, have in consequence undergone a kind of *regional conversion*: that is, have discovered that theological differences which matter in Europe cease to matter east of Suez; or that differences (which our ancestors fought over) must be regarded as noxious in India, though harmless in Europe.

No: I do not attribute to any of the supporters of the South India Scheme the doctrine that religious truth varies from continent to continent, and between race and race. While the scheme is pressed forward on the ground of the urgency of the problem in India, I do not believe that any of its promoters would try to inveigle our assent on the ground that this scheme is for India alone, and that we need have no fear of any attempt to enlarge it to include Britain and the rest of the Empire. Those who urge it in India may have eyes only for India; but the scheme is passionately championed by many people in England. These are honest and earnest men; and they advocate the scheme as a pattern for future reunion in this country also. I am sure that this is the goal towards which they strive, that this is the consummation for which they hope: to attribute to them any more limited aim would be to impugn their honesty, or to charge them with a heresy greater than any which might lurk in the scheme itself. Between the "missionary field" and the "home field" there can be no radical difference – England was once a missionary field: what is good for one is good for the other. The South India Scheme can only be defended if it is good for the whole world as well as for India. If it is accepted in India, it will inevitably be proposed in England. Not only logic will compel it, but circumstance. A precedent will have been established; the inconsistency will become intolerable; and we shall be told that if we do not conform to the precedent of India, it is we who will be responsible for the consequent disorder.

At this point, I must draw attention to the fact that there are two possible attitudes towards the problem of reunion in general: attitudes which involve different *feeling* as well as different processes of thought; which indicate diversity of temperament; which have not yet, I think, been fully brought into the open; but which conceal incompatibilities not easily traceable to their source. There are those who consider that the division of Christendom into separated fragments is *a priori* a sin against Our Lord; that it is contrary to His intention; and that we do not need to inspect the obvious consequences, to come to the conclusion that it is a sin. To assert this is not necessarily to assign the burden of sin, on the occasion of every historical schism, to the seceding or dissident body. Some sins of division have been due to extreme provocation; to established abuses and tardy reformation; and even when the provocation may appear, to the student of history, to have been offered only by individuals wanton in power, venality, luxury or sloth, yet the body cannot dissociate itself from the actions of its members. Our divisions, from this point of view, constitute an evil for which all of us, in different ways and in different degree, must bear the guilt: and our primary sin has been, not against each other, but against God. Any scheme of reunion, then, must be conceived in repentance, and delivered in reparation.

This is one view. The other view ignores, or tacitly repudiates, our responsibility for the sins of our fathers. It judges schism and heresy, only by the more palpable consequences. It may consider that each withdrawal of a sect from the common body was, at the time and in the circumstances in which it took place, pardonable and even laudable; but that circumstances have changed. Those who hold this view see at home the weakness of divided Christianity against the powers of positive unbelief; they see on the continent of Europe, the results of the domination of these powers; and they see, in the mission field, the confusion resulting from sectarian conversion. They therefore conclude, on practical grounds, that the effort towards reunion should be made. I have just used the word "reunion": but I think it would not be unfair to say that they aim not so much at the restoration of any previous unity, as at the instauration of a new unity.[15]

Between these two attitudes it is no part of my present purpose to pronounce: I have only to declare that the Proposed Scheme for Church Union in South India appears to be animated by the second. The statement issued, in 1919, by the conference at Tranquebar of which I have spoken, indicates a spirit to which its members, and their successors, have been faithful in their efforts of twenty-four years to find a formulary of agreement. It is reprinted in the prefatory matter to the actual Draft Scheme:

> We believe that the challenge of the present hour in the period of reconstruction after the war, in the gathering together of the nations and the present critical situation in India itself, call us to mourn our past divisions and to turn to our Lord Jesus Christ to seek in Him the unity of the body expressed in one visible Church. We face together the titanic task of the winning of India for Christ – one-fifth of the human race. Yet confronted by such an overwhelming responsibility, we find ourselves rendered weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions – divisions for which we were not responsible and which have been, as it were, imposed upon us from without; divisions which we did not create, and which we do not desire to perpetuate.[16]

There is of course a curious pathos about this, as about so many of the excellent aspirations voiced in those melancholy few years immediately after the last war; a pathos tinged with the irony of the close resemblance between the words then uttered, on many subjects, and the words which people are using now. But what is significant here is the close relating of the impulse towards unification with a particular contemporary situation. There is certainly no confession of inveterate sin. The thirty-three signatories expressly disclaim responsibility. And it is quite clear from the preamble to the published Scheme, that no constituent body will be expected to admit that it has been, in any particular, in error. We are repeatedly told that each is to make its "contribution." It is assumed that each body – Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist – is in possession of some part of excellence and truth, and that these parts only need to be combined. It is never suggested that any body may contribute anything in the way of falsehood. It is apparently an assumption of such a scheme, that everybody is right. There is to be no "absorption" of any part by any other. This happy result, in which nobody has anything of importance to surrender, is arrived at by assuming that the only doctrines which matter are those upon which the several parties already agree; and, where agreement is not secure, by having recourse to some phrase of ambiguous interpretation.

I do not propose to analyse either the "draft basis of union" or the "draft constitution" in detail. I shall consider the general tenor of the Scheme and then examine one point as an example of the type of thinking by means of which it is constructed. But first I should present those doctrines which the uniting churches confess in common, and which they hold as the essential and firm foundation of union. They are set forth under the caption: "The Faith of the Church."

> The uniting Churches accept the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation and as the supreme and decisive standard of faith; and acknowledge that the Church must always be ready to correct and reform itself in accordance with the teaching of those Scriptures as the Holy Spirit shall reveal it.
>
> They also accept the Apostles' Creed and the Creed commonly called the Nicene, as witnessing to and safeguarding that faith; and they thankfully acknowledge that same faith to be continuously confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the experience of the Church of Christ.

> Thus they believe in God, the Father, the Creator of all things, by whose love we are preserved;
>
> They believe in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God and Redeemer of the world, in whom alone we are saved by grace, being justified from our sins by faith in Him;
>
> They believe in the Holy Spirit, by whom we are sanctified and built up in Christ and in the fellowship of His Body;
>
> And in this faith they worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. [4-5]

To this brief statement is appended an important note, which states that, while the uniting Churches "accept the fundamental truths embodied in the Creeds named above as providing a sufficient basis of union," they do not demand the assent of individuals *to every word or phrase in them*, or exclude reasonable liberty of interpretation.[17] Where no particular words or phrases are mentioned, as those in respect of which liberty of interpretation is allowed, we must assume that this liberty applies to *every* word and phrase; and as for what may be "reasonable liberty of interpretation," we must suppose that anything is reasonable which does not offend the majority in a Synod of the new Church – a Synod in which the judgment of the bishops *may* be overruled by the opinion of the laity.[18]

We may form some conjecture about the way in which these essential Articles of Faith were arrived at, by considering certain tendencies in the religious thought of our time. The report that Christianity was a declining force, that not only Christian belief but Christian morality was increasingly repudiated, became a common rumour soon after the last war. The perception that Christians were a diminishing minority of decreasing influence, helped to supply impetus to what bears the impressive name of the ecumenical movement. In one respect, perhaps, this movement represented no more than is contained in the adages that misery loves company, and necessity makes strange bedfellows; but its aspirations were noble; some of its fruits have been good; it has had, and should continue to have, great value. It has led to a number of conferences and discussions. That the most eminent members of different communions, and Christians of different races and tongues, should come together to learn to know each other; that in discussing the theological obstacles between them they should acquaint themselves with each other's personal, social and national peculiarities, and thus be mutually in a better position to sift their essential and irreducible differences from those which are accidental and contingent: this association is valuable and should not be interrupted. That Christians should endeavour to discover a common basis for social action, on behalf of what is common in their faith and for the world's sake, and having found such a basis to act upon it, is desirable beyond all question. But a latent danger is now revealing itself. It is coming to be taken for granted by many, not only that Christians should be "united across all divisions," not only that they should aspire and strive towards reunion, but that the only essential doctrines are those which they all hold in common. This view, to be sure, does not embrace the more fantastic of the eccentric sects: but the more fantastic sects are conveniently small in numbers, and weak in influence, and so may for the present be disregarded. But, amongst the more numerous and powerful Protestant churches, in England and America, we observe a tendency to assume that the only essential doctrines are the ones on which they are in accord.

This view, in which a genuine zeal for Christianity is oddly compounded with a waning belief in any particular church, finds vigorous expression in the field of education. It is natural enough that those who take alarm at the decline, not only of Christian belief, worship and practice but even of the most elementary knowledge of Christianity in every class of the population, should desire that in a national system of education some instruction in the rudiments of that traditional faith should find a place; and it is natural that these should be joined by many, who are actuated, not so much by the fervour of their own faith as by their alarm at the consequence of the loss of it by others. With this movement for the development of religious teaching in schools I make no quarrel: but here again, and here in particular, we observe that the difficulty of teaching, in schools entirely under the direction of public authorities, more than what is held in common by the more important denominations in England, tends to bring about the belief that those tenets of the Christian Faith which are thus held in common are all that anyone needs to know or to believe. If this view (which is yet for the most part unconscious) comes to prevail, each Church will lose its distinguishing characteristics, and all will be merged in a national system of minimal Christianity – a British, or possibly an Anglo-American Christianity – in which the few remaining doctrines will be open to an indefinite latitude of individual interpretation, and to an indefinite future of revision and re-adaptation according to whatever airs of progress and enlightenment blow through the windows of the Board of Education.

I introduce these considerations only to adduce evidence that any scheme of reunion is, nowadays, assured in advance of the unreflecting support of considerable numbers of Christian people, and therefore requires to be scrutinised with all the more care. Christians have prayed for the healing of division, and have cast about for ways to achieve it, before now; but until the present age, have overlooked the one direct and easy route to reunion – which indeed has been available all through the centuries, had they had but eyes to see it: namely, to find what we can all agree upon and jettison every doctrine not approved by all. (That is not, of course, exactly what the framers of the Scheme for South India think they have done: they are under the impression that every party and every individual may enter that Church bringing all their doctrinal furniture and liturgical baggage with them – but, I shall presently endeavour to show, this apparent comprehensiveness is quite illusory.) This convenient method has perhaps been encouraged by the currency given to the term "Faith and Order." I do not suppose that it was in the minds of the initiators of the *Faith and Order Movement*, when they yoked the two words, that *faith* was one thing and *order* was another, and that we could all agree, without dispute, what are matters of the one and what of the other.[19] In 1910, and later at the Lausanne and Edinburgh conferences, the use of the two terms together simply covers the field of discussion, and no further inferences are to be drawn. But I suspect that now we have heard the two terms together for so long, people tend to take for granted that *faith* and *order* denote two clearly demarcated areas. Yet what is a matter of mere "order" for one person – that is, a matter of efficient administration – may be a matter of faith for another; and equivocation on matters of faith and order is (as I shall attempt presently to show by one illustration) apparent in the South India Scheme.

Before approaching this point, however, I call attention to a general question of meaning which is either ignored, or studiously avoided, in the South India Scheme: that is the related several meanings of the word "church." When we speak of "the churches," we ordinarily mean all those Christian bodies which have separated from each other, either on grounds of *doctrine*, or for reasons of *place*, or both. On certain grounds of doctrine, the Baptists, for instance, are apart from all other Christian denominations, and we speak commonly of the Baptist Church.[20]* On grounds of place, we have the Protestant Episcopal "Church" in America, and the "Churches" of the Anglican Communion in the Dominions. These differences of doctrine and of place, do not in the same way constitute different "churches," but there is no danger of confusion. In both kinds, different "churches" have been established by separation. The founders of the proposed South India Church may exclaim that as their church is the first to be formed by anything like comprehensive reunion it must naturally differ. But there is a difference deeper than any which they would acknowledge. Dissident sects are formed by groups of people who find that they hold some view, believed by them to be of the utmost importance, which is ignored or disapproved by the majority in the church from which they separate themselves. One would expect reunion to reverse this course: to follow from the slow growth, or sudden recognition, of identity. But the principle of the South India Scheme is not "we agree, therefore let us unite," but "let us unite, in the hope that in thirty years' time we shall agree." The expectation is that if several bodies determine to behave, for thirty years, as if they were one, they will become one.[21] There are three possibilities to hope, fear, or forecast. The Anglicans concerned may hope that the non-conformists will become anglicanised; the non-conformists may hope that the Anglicans will develop a non-conformist mind. Somebody is likely to be disappointed: and indeed the result, in the ripeness of time, may be some sectarian curiosity which none of the present participants would recognise. The Church of South India is a *pre-fabricated* church: and this originality in its construction must strike anyone who examines the Draft Constitution. It reads like the prospectus for a company flotation: and indeed that is what the South India Church, in its initial stages, is – a holding company, framed to control the shares in three distinct operating companies.

I have not, in drawing this distinction between the structure of the South India Church and all previous churches, exhausted the ambiguities of the word "church." There is one difference which has very deep root. In one use of the word, it means the "visible Church" founded by Jesus Christ and living continuously since its foundation: people who use it in this way attach great importance to its continuity. In another use, it means the "invisible Church," consisting of all true believers, living and dead and to come, whose number cannot be counted or determined by any outward sign or profession. Those who use the term exclusively in the second sense, tend to think of the visible churches rather as societies or associations, of a voluntary nature, which a man may join or leave at will. But for those to whom the first meaning is paramount, the Church is something which lives: as a tree may be encumbered by parasites, warped and mutilated by tempest, crippled by disease, so the Church lives, sustained by the Holy

Ghost, Who causes the sap to flow through its living limbs. Like every other living thing it is something more than and different from the sum of its members. These different meanings of the word "church" must be kept in mind in reading the Proposed Scheme for Church Union in South India, since there is no evidence that they are recognised in the document itself. Were they recognised, they would obtrude the difference of approach between those who regard the church as an organism and those who regard it as a society. The Church of England has always regarded itself, as have the Eastern Churches, as a living member of one visible Church: it does not concede that it was founded (in the sense in which a local church has had a human founder) by Henry VIII, or by the Regents of Edward VI, or by Queen Elizabeth, but holds itself to derive from Augustine. If its members are to enter into a union, on terms of complete parity, with non-conformists, they must acknowledge that they are leaving a church and entering a society. And if the Church of England associates itself with this new "church," on terms of inter-communion, then it also is surrendering its claim to be a church, and is accepting the status of a society.

The South India Scheme has been framed with the greatest ingenuity and care, with the aim that persons of the most diverse opinions may submit themselves to it with a good conscience. But while it is true that the Constitution tolerates every conceivable variety of *practice*, I think it will be found that there are some concealed restrictions on *belief*. I suspect, indeed I hope, that there may prove to be some dissenters, in whom a stern conscience and a sound head will conspire to prevent them from joining this amiable masquerade. That is not a question on which I am qualified to hold a confident opinion: what I am sure of is, that some Anglicans will be unable to reconcile membership of this Church with their beliefs, however insistently the defenders of the Scheme may tell them they can. This brings me to the vexed question of Episcopacy and the Apostolical Succession. As I have experienced some difficulty in making my view on this point clear to correspondents, I shall now put forth an exceptional effort towards lucidity, to which I hope the reader will respond by an exceptional effort of attention.

For a statement of the two opposed views of the nature of episcopacy, I am content to take the words used in the statement of the Scheme itself, as follows:

> For example, some regard episcopacy merely as a form of church government which has persisted in the Church through the centuries and may

> as such be called historic, and which at the present time is expedient for the Church in South India. Others believe that episcopacy is of divine appointment, and that episcopal ordination is an essential guarantee of the sacraments of the Church. Some, again, hold various views intermediate between these two. The acceptance of episcopacy by the uniting Churches, in which there are such differing views and beliefs concerning it and concerning orders of the ministry, is not to be taken as committing the united Church to the acceptance of any particular interpretation of episcopacy, and no such particular interpretation shall be demanded from any minister or member of the united Church. [9-10]

Here I must ask the reader to accept my assurance (which he can test for himself when he has read to the end of my discussion of this point) that the objection which I am about to raise does not depend upon my accepting one of these views rather than the other. My objection should be equally cogent whichever view is held: and I do not here assert one view to be right and the other wrong. Similarly, the question of what is the traditional view of the Church of England, or of what has been affirmed, believed, or admitted by implication, at any time or by any individual or party, does not arise.

The *Basis of Union* of the South India Church (from which the quotation above is taken) goes on to declare that these differences of interpretation are no concern of the Church, but are matters for private opinion:

> Whatever differences there are, however, all the uniting Churches are agreed that, as Episcopacy has been accepted in the Church from early times, it may in this sense fitly be called historic, and that it is needed for the shepherding and extension of the Church in South India. Any additional interpretations, though held by individuals, are not binding on the united Church. [10]

The issue turns on the meaning we attach to the solemn phrase of *divine appointment*. Whatever in the Church is of divine appointment, one would expect to be binding upon all members of the Church: for it is inconceivable that Our Lord should divinely appoint anything, and yet not bind it upon His Church. Observe that it is not I who introduce this question of "divine appointment": it is the framers of the Scheme themselves. They might have denied that episcopacy is of divine appointment: this denial they have deliberately avoided, for they wish to leave room in their fold for those who do believe it. Episcopacy *may* be of divine appointment, they say; but even if Our Lord divinely appointed it, He is indifferent whether any member of His Church believes that He did so. From the point of view of the Church of South India it is merely "an additional interpretation . . . not binding on the united Church."

What, then, must be the situation of anyone who does believe in what is called the Apostolical Succession? If he is to be a member of the Church of South India, he can only hold this belief as a private opinion: yet belief in the doctrine is a belief that it is binding on the whole Church. The situation is intolerable: unless his mind is as confused as those of the framers of the Scheme, he must either withdraw from that Church or recant. The difficulty cannot be limited to this one stumbling block; it cannot be separated from that of the validity of orders and the validity of the Sacraments; it is part of a fatal crack which runs through the Constitution of the South India Church from top to bottom. The priest may believe that the power to celebrate a valid Eucharist would not be his, unless he had been ordained by a bishop. But in the Church of South India he would not be justified in teaching his flock that this is so, because it is a "debatable matter": all that the Constitution of the Church empowers him to tell his catechumens is, that "[i]t has in experience been found best that one minister should lead the worship of the Church, and pronounce the words of consecration in the service of Holy Communion" [28]. Indeed, on one point after another, the priest will not be in a position to say "this is what the Church teaches": he can only say "this is what I myself believe."

In this situation there is an argument, of a very simple nature, which appears to the supporters of the South India Scheme so irrefutable that I must be at some pains to refute it. It is this: that there exist very wide, and notorious, differences of doctrine among theologians (or at least among ecclesiastics) of the Church of England; and that the Scheme does not attempt to include any varieties of belief which are not responsibly represented in the Church of England. For every affirmation made by the Scheme (they can say, with reason) there is *somebody* in the Church of England who believes it; for every omission, there is *somebody* who rejects it; for every ambiguity, there is some mind which battens upon ambiguities. The Scheme for Church Union in South India, they say, does no more than recognise explicitly differences which are found within the Anglican Church; it does no more than formulate the points of doctrine, the only points of doctrine, upon which members of the Church of England are agreed. Why, then, should we protest against a situation in India which we put up with at home?

That it has been, on the whole, characteristic of the Church of England to leave a great latitude of belief and interpretation, rather than to strive for the utmost precision; that it has tolerated a minimal, rather than insisted upon a maximal, conformity among its members; that it has preferred to err, where there is risk of error, through laxity rather than through strictness, is not to be denied. But in the first place we must judge how much latitude is, at the present time, accepted as signifying matters which we think fit to leave unsettled, and how much is merely tolerated as individual eccentricity over which we have no control – the latter including opinions deplored and disapproved, but left unmolested in the belief that liberty must be preserved, and that false doctrine will in the end be confuted. Now the only official compendium of the divergences of opinion which can be regarded as authoritative, is that embodied in the report on *Doctrine in the Church of England: The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922*, completed and published in 1938.[22] This report does recognise a number of questions of the first importance upon which a carefully chosen committee of theologians was unable to reach unanimity. But two qualifications are to be noted. This report was instituted as a survey of the existing state of opinion, and the existing variations of belief, among responsible doctors of the Church: it neither sanctions these differences, nor attempts to solve them. The second is that some extreme opinions, such as would be permissible in the Church of South India, are not noticed at all. For instance, the Commission devoted fifteen pages to the concept of Sacrifice: the present Bishop of Truro, in a recent pamphlet entitled *The Gospel for To-morrow*, giving a page to the Communion Service, dismisses the matter with the words: "[a]bsurd notions about sacrifice have crept in, notions which discredit both God and man."[23]

The essential point, however, about these extraordinary differences (I say extraordinary, to distinguish them from those which fall within that latitude, avoiding exact definition of the indefinable, which has always characterised Anglican theology as a whole) is that we do not agree to differ. We do not say that these things do not matter. Neither the present Bishop of Truro, nor his deceased predecessor in the same chair, could concede that it is of no importance what view of the Eucharist prevails, or whether several views co-exist indefinitely.[24] There are degrees, perhaps three main degrees, to be recognised. There are the questions upon which we may agree that no official pronouncement is desirable, but which should be left to private judgment; there are the questions which we may agree ought to be settled, but which do not destroy unity – a believer in the Real Presence and a Receptionist may communicate at the same altar without offence; and there are differences, the absence of a settlement of which neither party to the controversy can regard as anything but a scandal.[25]

So far, however, as this argument affects our conclusions about the South India Scheme, it amounts to no more than the assertion that the existence of deplorable conditions in one church does not justify their extension to another: as the existence of unsanitary dwellings in a nineteenth-century industrial town does not excuse the omission of plumbing from the plans for a new industrial centre. But there is a more cogent consideration still: the difference between an existing Church within which scandalous divergences of doctrine and practice have grown up, and a new Church to be erected *upon the foundation* of divergences. The Church of England maintains its unity in spite of the differences, and because we do not agree to disagree. Each party in this Church can defend its own doctrine, in the conviction that its doctrine is the true doctrine of the Church of England. And it is unable to defend it on any other ground: hence the ingenious appeals to authority and to history, the contradictory interpretation of the same words and events in the history of the Church, with which every party must support its argument. If any party acknowledged that it wanted to impose a new doctrine, or to alter the doctrine of the Church, its case would collapse: for it could appeal to no stronger support than the fact that this was its own predilection or than the claim to have received a revolutionary revelation of the Holy Ghost exclusive to itself. Hence every innovation must give itself the guise either of the revival of a lapsed tradition, or of a "re-interpretation in the light of modern knowledge," of old doctrine not previously understood.[26] Once the Church of England agreed that all the questions on which its members differ should be left to individual opinion, it would substitute, for the scandal of opposing doctrines, the phantom unity of a Church with no doctrine at all. In a church with no past, a church pieced together like the Church of South India, there can be no implication that of two conflicting views one must be right, and that the one which is right, whichever it may be, is binding upon the whole Church. In this Church, there is accordingly introduced one new and revolutionary doctrine: the doctrine that a number of doctrines are not doctrines, but are matters for private opinion. And to affirm this is to alter the meaning of every doctrinal point affected.

It may be as well to remind the reader at this point, that there is no question of opposing obstacles to reunion in South India, or of interfering with the liberty of Christians to do as they please in that part of the world. But there is a decision which we are asked to make, and which we cannot avoid. What the metropolitans of the churches of the Anglican Communion are called upon to do, is to give notice, on being approached by the heads of the Indian dioceses, whether the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (out of which the Anglican members of the new church will come) is or is not, as a result of the change, in communion with us. If the South India Scheme is carried out, ecclesiastical authority in England may well hesitate, before refusing recognition and inter-communion: for any unjustified rigour in excommunication would incur a share of responsibility for the subsequent schism. Yet to preserve the appearance of unity at any cost, may be to prefer the shadow to the substance: there are worse evils than disunity. The argument that illusory union would give rise to further schism, the argument that approval of the South India Church would separate us irreparably from the Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe, the argument that it would exacerbate the differences already existing within the Church of England: these arguments are sound and cogent. But they have been advanced by others, and they are, I think, arguments the consequences of which the more extreme supporters of the South India Scheme are prepared to accept. They are arguments about *division*: and what I am concerned with, and what I believe to be the concern of the reader whom I address, is that the Church of England should not be *destroyed*.

The consequences of our acceptance of the South India plan of reunion would be slow in manifesting themselves. Everything would appear to go on just as before: no church would be spoiled of its ornaments, no church would be shorn of its liturgy, no church would have unfamiliar and unacceptable additions or alterations of ritual forced upon it. It is not probable that more intruders would present themselves at the altar, that there would be more brawling in the pews, or interruptions of the sermon. There might even be less: for when it is expressly laid down, that many of the differences among us which have kindled sudden heat, or maintained stubborn dissension, are matters upon which every church member is entitled to his private opinion, what will there be left to brawl about? What occasion will there be to molest others? The peace of death will descend. No liberty need be affected; and so long as men are free to do as they please, they tend to think that all is well.

The majority of members of the Church of England, in particular, even those of constant activity in local church affairs, even those of strong piety, are apt to think in terms of their own parish. They have no strong feeling towards their diocese. They defend stoutly their local and congregational rights; in rural areas, even the most lax and irregular may be jealous for the identity of their parish. If their interest and activity are of a wider range, they are partisans of a movement, an association, or a congenial type of worship. But the Church of England is something that they take for granted. Nevertheless they are imbued with a spirit which they cannot define, which makes them equally uncomfortable in a Roman church or in a dissenting chapel; they are equally suspicious of the over-precise and of the vague. Strong in practical conscience, they are inclined to distrust the practice of the contemplative life; yet, with an obscure sense of spiritual values, they are dissatisfied with those accredited professors of spiritual knowledge who substitute good works for faith, and who insist upon social activity to the neglect of individual perfection. However indifferent to intellectual formulation, however unaccustomed to analyse their own feelings, they yet recognise themselves as members of a church and not of a religious society. They do not wish to be punctiliously exclusive, but they do not wish to demolish every barrier; to be further set apart from the rest of their nation, or to lose their identity in a mass movement of licentious ecumenicity. Some have accused the Reformed Church of England of having been, even at its best, of a golden mediocrity now somewhat tarnished: certainly it is a long way from Juliana of Norwich to George Herbert, and a long way from George Herbert to the Bishop of Truro. But whatever the shortcomings of this Church may be, the way to perfection is not to be found through voluntary liquidation; by further and further relaxation of conditions of membership; by the abolition of theology in favour of a few formula which anybody may interpret as he likes; by ceasing to be a church and becoming a benevolent association.

The peculiar character of the Church of England has been determined by the tension of Catholic and Protestant elements in it. By a tension between elements, I do not mean a struggle between extreme parties, but something which finds its place in the souls of those who are not extreme. The effect of such a scheme of reunion as that designed for South India, as many students of the scheme have perceived, would be to force the more intellectual elements in the Church, against their will, to adopt one extreme position or the other. In one instance, that of the Historical Episcopate, I hope that I have convinced the reader that the South India Scheme, instead of reconciling, as it aims to do, diverse doctrines of Episcopacy within a common order, actually compels a choice between two incompatible views – by the mere fact of defining these views. And by the imposition of this choice, such an accommodation would disrupt the Church.

I am not suggesting, however, that the most important effect would be either to force the more conscious Catholics, and those Protestants who have retained, in spite of the liberalising tendencies of the last century, some of the earlier Protestant doctrines and convictions, either to separate into two new bodies or to seek refuge in one or another of the churches which remain aloof. The majority of people are not theologically minded, and are indisposed to change; they would remain within the form of the Church of England. The gradual disappearance of Christian spiritual values, the substitution of words for realities, of humanism for faith, would be imperceptible to them. There would be plenty of religious currency to go round, and few would notice the extent to which the coinage had been debased. The tendency of the present time is to insist upon *quantity* and *distribution* – in education, in matters of social justice, and in religion: but a noble zeal is in this perverted, when *quality* is allowed to decline. The future of a Church of England, enlarged according to the pattern of South India, would be as an organ of the totalitarian state, charged with the preservation of morality in the interest of that state. It would be a National Church, not in the sense of representing the true religious spirit of the people, but as a department of the Board of Education. As a Church, it would be only a shell.

I trust that the charge will not be preferred, against the opponents of the South India Scheme, of either indifference or obstinacy towards aspirations of reunion of the Church of England with the dissenting bodies in the kingdom. It would be no more unjust, to accuse those who object to the building of tin bungalows or flimsy villas, of hostility to men dwelling in community. To me at least, it seems certain that the consequences of disunion, throughout the modern centuries, have been more grievous than has yet been recognised. No generous mind can welcome the task of denouncing the results of twenty years of devoted labour, on the part of such Christian men as the designers of the South India Scheme; no ingenuous heart can fail to be moved by the spectacle of such waste. Twenty patient years to build what is only an elaborate artifice! Twenty years to construct a pantomime horse! Yet, on a longer view, we can assure ourselves that no such efforts are wasted. The Conversations of Malines failed, as they were bound to fail: yet I believe that they made an instructive contribution for the guidance of future attempts.[27] The South India Scheme will be an utter failure, only if it is accepted and put into operation: if it is repudiated, it will, by providing a warning, have made its own contribution and achieved its own success. For what we have yet to learn, in our approaches to reunion, is the complexity of the problems; we have to learn that verbal agreement alone offers but a spectral unity; that we have to unite, not only phrases, but cultures; that protocols and concordats are vain without assimilation of sensibility; that we have to deal with human beings with human passions; and that sociological issues are involved, which far exceed the limits of what is ordinarily assumed to be the subject-matter of theology. To draw attention to these subjects of investigation, however, is not to diminish theology. On the contrary, it is to insist the more strongly upon a comprehensive theology, by setting it in relation to the whole life of man, of which it is the highest intellectual formation. The general problem of reunion takes us far beyond the limits of this essay: I hope to return to it in another context.[28]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The Council for the Defence of Church Principles was an ad hoc committee of Anglo-Catholic critics of the South Indian Church unification scheme. TSE's essay was the seventh in a series of pamphlets sponsored by the council. Some of these pamphlets were explicitly addressed to the Anglican clergy – thus the distinction made in TSE's subtitle and its reemphasis in his opening paragraphs. On the controversy over the scheme, see the introduction to this volume (6.xxxiii-xxxiv).

The chair of the Council, Fr. William B. O'Brien, SSJE, wrote TSE on 6 Apr 1943, after reading his "recent letter to the *Times*" (either 6.383 or 6.385), to solicit a pamphlet. On 26 May, TSE submitted a first draft of his pamphlet for O'Brien's criticism, and the two apparently met in Oxford to discuss it on 7 June. TSE's second draft, submitted on 3 Aug, is substantially the final version, which TSE posted to the publisher on 24 Aug. Only at this point did he settle on the title *Reunion by Destruction*, which he considered no better than suitable. "Had I been writing for my own limited public," he remarked to O'Brien, "I should have been inclined to call it *Notes on the Construction of Pre-Fabricated Churches*, but I think for this purpose anything so ironic and Ruskinian would be wholly out of place." Ruskin's 1851 theological pamphlet *Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds* argues (among other things) for the unification of the Protestant Christian sects in a single Church.

2. *Proposed Scheme of Union, Including Draft Basis of Union for Adoption by the Uniting Churches, Draft Constitution of the United Church, and Other Documents*, 7th rev. ed. (Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1943).

3. Tinevelly (now Tirunelveli), city in far South India; Dornakal, town in southeast India.

4*. TSE's note: "It is only fair to say that, at the moment of writing, the unanimous adherence of the South India United Church is by no means assured. If, however, this unanimity is secured, it will probably be at the cost of further concessions from the Anglican side. Alternatively, the outcome might be a division within the South India United Church itself."

The South India United Church was a preexisting union of several Protestant denominations, principally the Presbyterian and Congregationalist. In 1947 it merged with the southern Anglican diocese of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, and with the Methodist Church in South India to form the Church of South India.

5*. TSE's note: "of whom, according to a table of statistics given as an Appendix to the *Proposed Scheme of Church Union in South India*, about 100,000 are unbaptised."

For the table TSE cites in this note, headed "Christian Community of the three Churches in the area of the Union, 1941," see *Scheme*, 96. For each district of each Church, the table lists the number of communicants, the number of "other baptized adherents," the number of "unbaptized adherents," and the total. The table shows a grand total of 111,871 unbaptized adherents, including approximately 10 percent of the Anglicans and Methodists and approximately 14 percent of the other Protestants.

6. For the Draft Constitution, see *Scheme*, 23-89.

7. *Proposed Scheme of Union* (Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1929).

8. The special provisions for the first thirty years of the united Church include exceptions to the requirement of episcopal ordination and the acceptance of "freedom of opinion on debatable matters, and respect for even large differences of opinion and practice, such as exist at present" (18). The expectation that members will continue to "enjoy the full privileges" of their previous Churches, however, is not temporary but permanent and constitutional: "None of the ministers or members of the Church of South India shall because of the union forego any rights with regard to inter-communion and inter-celebration which they possessed before the union" (35).

9. "It is hoped that all the Churches with which the united Church has relations of communion and fellowship will be willing to receive any communicant member of the united Church to communion as a visitor in any of their churches" (*Scheme*, 17).

10. Lambeth: metonymically, the Church of England. Lambeth Palace is the Archbishop of Canterbury's London residence and the site of the periodic conferences of bishops in the international Anglican Communion.

11. The Syrian Christians, like other Christian denominations based in the southwestern state of Kerala, follow the tradition that St. Thomas the Apostle carried his missionary work to India in 52 and was martyred there twenty years later.

12. Beginning in 1497, when Vasco da Gama established a sea route to India, a series of armadas established Portuguese mercantile dominance and founded colonies along the coasts. The first Roman Catholic missionaries to India came with these fleets; St. Francis Xavier, one of the original Jesuits, arrived in 1542.

13. Lutheran missionaries from Germany began proselytizing India in 1706. Although the Anglican presence in India dates back to the early seventeenth century, the Church of England

was notoriously slow to evangelize, its efforts accelerating only in the first half of the nineteenth century. The British Raj was established in 1858.

14. G. F. Cranswick and Max Alexander Cunningham Warren, *A Vital Issue: Church Union in South India* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1943), 6. The first part of this pamphlet, authored by Cranswick, is titled "The Scheme Described" (3-13); the second, by Warren, "Objections Examined" (14-22). TSE's brief history of Indian Christianity in this paragraph closely follows the history outlined in the pamphlet (5-6).

15. *Instauration*: in the obsolete sense of "establishment," not the current sense of "renovation."

16. *Scheme*, iv-v. These words are quoted there from the 1919 statement issued by the Joint Committee of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, the South India United Church, and the South India Provincial Synod of the Methodist Church.

17. The note reads, in full: "The uniting Churches accept the fundamental truths embodied in the Creeds named above as providing a sufficient basis of union; but do not intend thereby to demand the assent of individuals to every word and phrase in them, or to exclude reasonable liberty of interpretation, or to assert that those Creeds are a complete expression of the Christian faith" (5). The statement on "The Faith of the Church" is repeated, without the qualifying note, within the constitution of the Church (26-27). Here the subject is not "The uniting Churches" but "The Church of South India," and the verbs are adjusted accordingly.

18. Although bishops and assistant bishops were to be *ex-officio* members of the governing Synod, each diocese was to be represented, according to the draft constitution, by several ordained presbyters and an even greater number of lay representatives, putting the bishops in the minority (64).

19. The Faith and Order Movement, founded in 1910, was an ecumenical organization concerned with the comparative study of doctrine, with the organization of the Christian Churches, and with the possibility of reconciliation. The group's First World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Lausanne in 1927, its Second World Conference in Edinburgh a decade later. After the war, it joined with the Life and Work Movement to form the World Council of Churches.

20*. TSE's note: "I say 'commonly,' as a reminder that this is a current use of the term 'church'; and that to refer to various separated bodies as 'churches,' instead of simply as 'societies,' may be regarded as a concession to courtesy and convenience. Dr. Johnson refused to concede to Boswell that a Scottish Presbyterian minister should be called a *divine*: but he objected to a number of other uses of words which have since been accepted."

21. "The united Churches recognize that the act of union will initiate a process of growing together into one life and of advance towards complete spiritual unity.... They therefore pledge themselves and fully trust each other that the united Church will at all times be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience either by Church authorities or by majorities, and that it will not in any of its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the Churches from which it has been formed" (*Scheme*, 18-19).

22. London: S.P.C.K., 1938. On this document, see "South Indian Church" (6.384, n.3).

23. Joseph Wellington Hunkin, *The Gospel for Tomorrow* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1941), 73. Hunkin (1887-1950), a theological modernist, was Bishop of Truro from 1935 until his death. His discussion of the Communion Service in *The Gospel for Tomorrow* is a direct attack on

deeply cherished Anglo-Catholic beliefs and practices with respect to the adoration and reservation of the Host (73-74; here, 73).

24. Hunkin's predecessor, Walter Howard Frere (1863-1938), was Bishop of Truro from 1923 to 1935. His "view of the Eucharist" was diametrically opposed to Hunkin's. A fervent High Churchman, Frere conducted services at Truro that – so some of his parishioners complained – were virtually indistinguishable from Roman Catholic Masses.

25. The doctrine of Real Presence maintains that Jesus is actually present in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist; Receptionism holds that the bread and wine remain unchanged in themselves, though the communicant receives the body and blood of Christ through them.

26. TSE's scare quotes mark a catchphrase in liberal theology. For example, Hunkin's précis of *The Gospel for Tomorrow* begins: "Many attempts are being made to re-state the essentials of Religion in the light of modern knowledge and in the language of to-day" (1).

27. Held in Malines (Mechelen), Belgium, between 1921 and 1925, the "Malines Conversations" were a bilateral exploration of possible reunion of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.

28. On 19 July 1943, while still at work on the pamphlet, TSE told Frank Morley: "The Prefabricated Church is nearly finished, the second draft of it, a pamphlet of about 30 pp. I think: I hope it is not too lively for a sober body like the Council for the Defence of Church Principles to want to sponsor, but I wrote it with some heat and satisfaction to myself. It is not wholly a side show, because I intend to work it in to my essay on culture." The only further writing TSE did on "the general problem of reunion," however, was his 1946 "Memorandum on Catholicity" (6.736).

The Bishop of Durham, A. T. P. Williams, published a reply to TSE in a pamphlet of his own: *Church Union in South India: A Reply to Mr. T. S. Eliot's "Reunion by Destruction"* (1944). To the Rev. J. L. Bowers, who had sent him a copy, TSE wrote on 10 May 1944: "I have read the pamphlet and I cannot feel that it is sufficiently detailed or pointed to require detailed reply. It is certainly not a pamphlet which needs another pamphlet to answer it." TSE did respond to another attack in "Reunion: Construction or Destruction? Mr. T. S. Eliot's Reply" (6.492).

On 15 Oct 1955, TSE sent a copy of *Reunion by Destruction* to Eleanor Hinkley "as an example of my best forensic style."

Des organes publics et privés de la coopération intellectuelle

Fontaine, 6 (1943) 1-7[1]

La fin de la dernière guerre a été suivie non seulement par un renouveau d'activités intellectuelles et artistiques dans plusieurs pays d'Europe qui avaient participé aux hostilités, mais encore par un regain de curiosité à l'égard des activités d'autrui. Du moins, c'est l'impression que m'a laissée cette période, et au cas où cette impression paraîtrait inexacte, je dirai que sans doute ma mémoire aura été tentée d'exagérer le nombre des personnes engagées dans ces activités. Mais en admettant même qu'il ne s'agissait que d'un petit nombre d'individus, c'étaient des gens qui comptaient, et pendant quelques années, on avait pu croire que les liens qui s'étaient établis entre eux à l'occasion de leurs échanges et communications, de leurs visites et associations de toute sorte étaient destinés à jouer un rôle dans la reconstitution de l'unité européenne. Avec quelle rapidité s'évanouirent tous les espoirs de ce genre, sous l'effet varié des désastres économiques et des passions politiques, je n'ai pas besoin de le rappeler. Il n'en reste pas moins qu'un premier pas avait été accompli sous l'inspiration spontanée de quelques individus. Peut-être une impulsion analogue va-t-elle surgir à nouveau à l'issue de la présente guerre ? Mais la question de savoir si une telle impulsion risque d'être étouffée une fois de plus à sa naissance n'est pas de mon ressort : la réponse appartient à ceux qui disposent des moyens de diriger ou d'influencer les destinées politiques et économiques de l'avenir. Quant à moi je me borne à rechercher comment il sera possible, dans la situation différente qui sortira d'une expérience également différente de faire un commencement, et c'est pourquoi je me soucie uniquement des conditions susceptibles de favoriser ou de contrarier ce commencement.

C'est en examinant la question en fonction de l'Angleterre et de la France que la différence dont j'ai parlé apparaît sous le jour le plus frappant. Pour ceux d'entre nous qui se préoccupent en Angleterre du problème de l'unité culturelle, nos rapports avec la France présentent une importance capitale. Une fois rétabli et développé, le réseau des contacts franco-anglais peut être aisément transposé à l'échelle de l'Europe entière. Si au contraire nos communications ne sont pas renouées nous ne serons plus qu'une entité quelconque au milieu de la foule des cultures provinciales. Mais il est bien évident que ce travail de restauration exigera un processus plus long et plus patient qu'il n'avait fallu il y a vingt-cinq ans. À cette époque, l'activité intellectuelle avait été forcément mise en veilleuse dans les deux Pays et les communications personnelles avaient été pratiquement interrompues pendant quatre ans. Il est vrai également que la France avait passé par une épreuve de dévastation dont l'Angleterre n'avait jamais connu d'exemple, que la majorité des Anglais n'avaient jamais eu l'occasion à aucun moment d'éprouver de façon bien précise la crainte de l'invasion et que les effets de la guerre aérienne avaient été, en comparaison de ce que nous devions connaître plus tard, presque négligeables. Malgré cela, on peut dire que les deux peuples avaient vécu une expérience commune. Dans la guerre de 1914, les expériences des nations belligérantes se ressemblaient beaucoup. Or, dans la guerre actuelle, il en va tout autrement. À peine trouverait-on deux nations pour prétendre qu'elles ont souffert de façon identique ; même les Neutres cantonnés dans leur rôle d'observation, n'auront pas connu d'expériences identiques, chacun aura eu ses propres difficultés et aura passé par les espoirs et les appréhensions particuliers à sa situation géographique propre et à ses affinités naturelles. Enfin, à la différence de la précédente, cette guerre a été précédée pour les différentes Nations par une période d'isolement psychologique grandissant – et cependant de conflits et d'hostilité qui s'exerçaient par delà les frontières nationales et qui se reflétaient à des degrés différents dans la politique intérieure de chaque pays. C'est pourquoi à la différence de 1919, il ne s'agira pas simplement cette fois-ci de reprendre les choses où elles avaient été laissées mais de s'atteler à une tâche autrement difficile.

Et même si nous n'avions qu'à reprendre les choses au commencement, nous nous heurterions encore à des difficultés plus grandes qu'autrefois et d'un caractère plus matériel. Des questions aussi simples d'apparence que la reprise des transports civils et l'octroi de facilités de voyage et de résidence aux étrangers, ne seront résolues vraisemblablement qu'après un long processus de restauration politique et administrative, qui exigera l'intervention de multiples délibérations entre les politiciens et les experts. Il faudra peut-être même attendre qu'une solution ait été apportée aux différents problèmes monétaires qui se posent sur le plan national comme sur celui des changes internationaux. Il est possible que les voyages deviennent coûteux et que beaucoup d'entre nous ne puissent se permettre la dépense de visites régulières. La poste sera peut-être lente et irrégulière ; il n'est pas certain que la censure des lettres puisse être rapidement relâchée. Toutefois, le moment semble être venu d'examiner sans plus tarder les perspectives d'avenir en nous préoccupant constamment de nos relations culturelles, de nos besoins, de nos difficultés et des occasions qu'il nous faudra saisir.

De toute évidence, les courants culturels s'établissent d'un pays à l'autre par le canal d'organismes variés qui correspondent à trois formes d'activités différentes : celles qui sont exercées directement par l'État ou sous le patronage de l'État ; celles des sociétés privées ; et enfin celles des individus. La dernière est celle qui dispose de la plus ancienne tradition, la première étant d'innovation récente. Il est difficile dans la pratique de tracer une ligne de démarcation bien nette entre ces trois sortes d'activités. Aucune distinction précise ne peut être établie entre une entreprise officielle, une entreprise fondée avec l'appui du gouvernement et une entreprise qui est simplement reconnue par le gouvernement ; de même qu'il n'est pas toujours facile d'identifier la nature propre d'un organisme particulier. Parallèlement, aucune distinction absolue ne peut être faite entre une société privée, ouverte sans distinction à tous les membres qui veulent bien y adhérer et l'association spontanée qui s'établit – peut-être dans un but plus limité – entre différents groupes d'individus qui sont liés entre eux par des relations personnelles.

Les institutions d'État, alimentées, en tout ou en partie, par des subventions publiques, bien que de création récente, ne courent pas de grands risques d'être supplantées par leurs rivales. Les différents « Instituts » et « Maisons » – les différentes branches du British Institute et du British Council dans les capitales neutres, et les Instituts qui ont été fondés par certains de nos alliés à Londres et à Édimbourg, – ont rendu de grands services pendant la guerre, en l'absence d'autre moyen de communication culturelle. J'ai dit que ces différents organismes ne risquaient pas de disparaître : il ne faudrait pas moins d'une rupture des relations culturelles, ce qui serait un grand malheur, pour les amener à fermer leurs portes ; normalement ces institutions ont tendance à perpétuer leur existence. En ce qui concerne l'activité de ces organisations, je n'ai aucune critique à présenter ; mais en ce qui concerne l'avenir, je voudrais faire deux observations ; je pense en premier lieu qu'il conviendra, lorsque la paix sera fermement établie, de modifier leurs attributions de façon à les mieux adapter aux circonstances nouvelles ; j'estime en second lieu que leur activité future doit viser à multiplier les moyens de communication naturels dont disposent les associations privées, les groupes d'individus et les particuliers, sans chercher à se substituer à eux. Naturellement, il y a toujours le risque que les organisations officielles dont il s'agit ne soient mises au service des exigences changeantes de la politique étrangère ; mais un plus grand danger, à mon avis, serait qu'elles ne tendent inconsciemment à s'inspirer des méthodes et à concourir aux buts poursuivis par les organisations à caractère commercial. En effet la tentation serait grande pour des fonctionnaires de considérer que la culture est un objet de transaction commerciale et qu'une nation où règne la prospérité culturelle est celle dont les exportations dépassent les importations. Il y a par exemple dans certains milieux une tendance étrange à considérer que la nation dont la langue est le plus répandue à l'étranger parce qu'elle sert de moyen de communication entre les peuples de langages différents, s'est acquis par cela même un lustre incomparable. Que la diffusion d'une langue comporte ou non de grands avantages diplomatiques ou commerciaux, je ne saurais le dire. Mais l'homme de lettres, surtout s'il exprime sa pensée dans l'un des grands langages du monde, le français ou l'anglais par exemple – l'écrivain qui est conscient de la valeur incomparable de l'instrument dont il dispose, qui sait combien il a fallu de siècles pour l'élaborer, au prix de quel effort et de quelle difficulté il a été possible de maintenir jusqu'à présent son excellence, et avec quelle facilité sa force et sa pureté pourraient disparaître, – cet homme est forcément plus préoccupé de la conservation du langage que de son exploitation.

Les sociétés privées, ouvertes à toutes les adhésions, ont le mérite de toutes les organisations recrutées parmi les volontaires enthousiastes. Elles sont également dégagées de toute préoccupation d'ordre politique et économique. Au même titre que les organismes contrôlés par l'État, elles ont, sur leur propre plan, une mission à remplir. Elles peuvent ouvrir à la disposition du public des bibliothèques où il trouvera les revues et les ouvrages littéraires courants ; elles peuvent accueillir les étrangers de marque et organiser des tournées de conférences. Mais les contacts ainsi réalisés sont forcément empreints d'un caractère collectif, formaliste et quelque peu mélangé. En ce qui concerne les écrivains importants, l'existence de telles sociétés peut fournir l'occasion de rencontres, que le temps et la sympathie mutuelle permettront quelquefois de développer. Mais aucune rencontre de ce genre, aucune tournée de conférence sous le patronage de l'État, ne pourra jamais tenir lieu de ces relations personnelles entre individus, sur l'existence desquels repose la véritable communauté culturelle des nations.

C'est en partant de ce point de vue, qu'il convient de reconnaître les limitations des manifestations collectives, qu'elles s'exercent à titre officiel ou volontaire, et par conséquent de définir soigneusement leurs fonctions légitimes. Mais ce qui importe avant tout et au plus haut point, c'est que les écrivains de chaque pays soient animés d'une vive curiosité pour tout ce qui touche à la pensée et à l'œuvre des meilleurs écrivains des autres pays – c'est là ce qui compte le plus à longue échéance, pour la compréhension intime et réciproque des deux pays et pour leur plus grand bien. Il est infiniment plus important d'arriver à une sorte de communauté de pensées entre les écrivains, – qui permettrait par exemple à l'influence de l'art et de la pensée française en Angleterre, de l'art et de la pensée anglaise en France, de se répandre respectivement par le canal des écrivains anglais en Angleterre, et des écrivains français en France, – que de développer dans les couches instruites de la population une avide curiosité pour la littérature de l'autre pays. Et parmi tous les écrivains, les plus efficaces à ce point de vue seront ceux qui auront pu établir des relations personnelles dans l'autre pays, qui se seront intéressés non pas seulement à sa littérature, mais aussi à sa société ; qui se seront familiarisés avec ses formes extérieures et seront arrivés ainsi à épouser sa sensibilité, qui auront su enfin se créer non pas seulement une foule de connaissances mais quelques amitiés véritables.

De tels écrivains ne peuvent pas être bien nombreux à aucun moment, et il n'est nullement nécessaire qu'ils le soient ; mais il est essentiel qu'ils aient l'appui de ceux de leurs collègues qui ont une certaine connaissance de la littérature classique de l'autre pays et qui manifestent quelque intérêt aux œuvres contemporaines, tout en ne possédant pas, au même degré, les avantages des premiers. Je souhaiterais personnellement qu'on crée ou qu'on fasse revivre – dans la capitale de tous les pays qui prétendent à la culture européenne ou qui s'y intéressent de façon quelconque – avant tout à Londres et à Paris, – des revues périodiques littéraires, dont les éditeurs et les principaux collaborateurs, occasionnels ou réguliers, s'appliqueront à établir entre eux des liens de relations personnelles. C'est là, peut-être, la seule suggestion positive que je désire faire pour l'instant.

Je désire simplement répéter, qu'à mon avis, les organismes publics et officiels continueront à rendre des services, mais à condition que les gens de lettres ne se contentent pas d'en accepter purement et simplement ou d'en ignorer l'existence, mais les considèrent comme des sujets d'observation et de critique. Il sera plus que jamais indispensable qu'un petit nombre d'individus demeurent capable de faire les distinctions qui s'imposent entre la culture et la politique. Il sera plus que jamais désirable que les écrivains d'Angleterre et de France renouent et étendent leur contact, qu'ils aient pleinement conscience du fait que nous avons beaucoup à apprendre les

uns des autres et encore plus à comprendre, en raison de la diversité de nos expériences des trois dernières années. Pour cela nous n'aurons pas besoin qu'on nous dicte notre devoir, mais seulement qu'on nous facilite la tâche.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

ORIGINAL UNTITLED ENGLISH TEXT

The close of the last war was followed not only by a revival of intellectual and artistic activities in the several European countries which had been engaged, but by a renewed and increased curiosity, in each country, in the activities of the others. Such is my recollection: if it appears inaccurate, the most likely cause is that my memory exaggerates the number of persons who experienced this concern. But even if the numbers were small, these were people who counted; and for a few years it seemed as if the interchanges, the communications, the visits and the associations formed, might play a part in the reconstitution of a European unity. How quickly any hopes were extinguished, by the various effects of economic disasters and political passions, I have no need to recall. The point is that a beginning was made, by the spontaneous motion of individuals. The question whether such an impulse, arising again after this war, would again be thwarted, is one outside of my province: it is for those who control, or who can influence, the future of economic and political policy. My concern is simply how, in the different situation following a different kind of war, a beginning can be made, and with the conditions which may advance or impede it.

The most obvious difference is in the relation of England and France. To those of us in England, who are concerned with the problem of cultural unity, our communications with France are of capital importance. If these can be established and developed, a pattern of growth can be extended over the whole of Europe; if they remain broken, we can expect nothing better than a variety of provincial cultures. Their restoration, it is manifest, must be a matter of a longer and more patient process than was necessary twenty-five years ago. Intellectual activity had, of course, been very much reduced, and personal communications interrupted. It is also true that France experienced a devastation such as England has never known; that the majority of people in England were at no time in any very lively fear of invasion, and that the effects of air warfare were, in comparison to what we have since suffered, almost trifling. Nevertheless, the experience was a common experience. In that war, the experiences of the combatant nations had much in common. In this war, hardly any two nations can be said to have suffered in quite the same way; even the neutrals, in this war, do not share the identical experience of observers, but [each] suffers its own inconveniences, and undergoes the peculiar hopes and apprehensions of its own geographical position and natural affinities. And, finally, this war, in contrast to its predecessor, was preceded by a period of increasing psychological isolation of one country from another, and of conflicts and hostilities which transcended frontiers, and expressed themselves, in various degrees, in the domestic affairs of every nation. In contrast to 1919, therefore, we have much more to do than simply to begin where we left off.

And even were it merely beginning where we left off, we should find ourselves faced also with more difficulties of a more material kind. It seems likely that the mere restoration of civil transport, of facilities for travel and foreign residence, may have to wait upon a slow process of political and administrative restoration, and the multiplied deliberations of politicians and experts. It may have to await the solution of the problem of foreign exchange and currency. It is possible that travel will be costly, it is possible that many of us will be unable to afford the expense of regular visits. The mails may be slow and irregular, the censorship of letters may be not quickly relaxed. It seems time, therefore, that we should begin to examine our prospects, and follow future events, with a thought to cultural relations, to our needs, difficulties and opportunities.

Cultural currents between one country and another have three obvious channels: that of activity undertaken by, or under the auspices of, the State; that of the activity of private societies; and that of individuals. The last has the longest tradition, the first is the most recent innovation. The border line between these three types of activity cannot be sharply drawn. Between the enterprise controlled by a government, the enterprise aided by a government, and the enterprise merely recognized by a government, no clear distinction can in practice be made; nor it is always easy to identify the nature of any particular undertaking. Similarly, between the impersonal private society, which offers attractions to anyone who may care to join, and the informal association of groups in personal relations – perhaps for a more limited purpose – no clear distinction can be made.

The institutions sponsored by, and partially or wholly supported out of public funds, are of recent growth, but are not likely to be superseded. The various "institutes" and "houses" – in which I include both the British institutes and British Council offices established in neutral capitals, and the institutes of several of our allies which have been founded in London and Edinburgh – have been performing a very desirable function during the war, when other means of cultural communication have been in abeyance. I have said that they are not likely to be superseded: if they came to an end, it would be only as the result of such a rupture of cultural relations as would be a misfortune; otherwise, such institutions tend to persist in existence. I have no criticism to make of the activities of any of these organizations; but, with a view to the future, I have two observations to offer. The first is, that on the foundation of a settled peace, their functions will have to be reviewed and adapted to the change of circumstances; the second, that their future action must be, not to replace, but to supplement, the channels of communication of private associations, groups, and individuals. There is of course always a danger that official organizations may be directed to subserve the shifting demands of foreign policy; a greater danger, I think, is that they may tend unconsciously to imitate the aims, and follow the methods, of organizations designed to promote trade. The assumption that culture is something that we want to sell to each other, that the culturally prosperous nation is the one which exports more culture than it imports, is one into which it would be very easy for the official mind to fall. There is, for instance, a curious belief in some quarters that the nation whose language is most widely spoken by foreigners, and used for communication between each other by peoples speaking different languages from each other, has gained thereby some illustrious distinction. Whether this dissemination of one language has great advantages for trade, or for diplomacy, I cannot say. But the man of letters, especially if his vehicle is one of the great languages, such as French or English – the man who knows what a precious instrument he possesses, how many centuries have gone to its development, with what difficulty and toil its excellence is maintained, and with what ease its strength and purity may be destroyed – must be concerned with the preservation of his language, rather than with its exploitation.

The private society, offering advantages open to any member of the public, has the merit of all organisations which are recruited from enthusiastic volunteers. It has also freedom from political and economic considerations. Like the government-controlled bureau, it has a valuable function to fulfill on its own level. It can provide a library, in which periodicals and current literature can be perused; it can entertain foreign visitors of celebrity, and it can arrange for visiting lecturers. But the contacts it brings about are necessarily somewhat collective, miscellaneous and formal. So far as the more significant men of letters are concerned, such societies may provide an occasion for acquaintance, which time and mutual sympathy may improve. But neither this, nor the government-sponsored tour, can take the place of those relationships between individuals upon which the true cultural community of nations must depend.

It is from this point of view that we must recognise the limitations, and accordingly insist upon the right functions, of all public efforts, whether official or voluntary. That writers in each country should feel a lively curiosity about what is being thought and written by the best writers in the other, is the first and most important condition – in the long run – for intimate relation and reciprocal benefit between the two countries. It is more important that writers should develop something like a common mind, such that the influence of French art and thought in England, and of English art and thought in France, should be exerted through French writers in France, and through English writers in England, than that the whole of the educated populace in each country should exhibit an avid appetite for the literature of the other. And amongst the writers, the most necessary for this purpose are those who establish personal relations in the other country; who study, not only its literature but its society; who through attaining proficiency in its manners, come to share its sensibility; who gain, not merely a host of acquaintances, but a few friends.

Such writers cannot be, and need not be, at any time very numerous; but they should be supported by others, not possessing the same advantages to the same degree, who have some knowledge of the classical literature of the other country, and some interest in its contemporary writing. I should like to see established – or revived – in the capital of every country which has any pretensions to, or interest in, a European culture – and primarily in London and Paris – literary periodicals, the editorial groups and chief contributors of which should endeavour to establish personal relations with each other. That is perhaps the only positive suggestion I have to make at the moment. But I should like to repeat, that I think the public and official organisations will continue to have value, on condition that they are neither simply accepted or simply ignored by men of letters, but kept under observation and criticism. It will be more than ever necessary, that there should be a small number of people capable of distinguishing culture from politics. It will be more then ever desirable, that men of letters in the two countries should renew and extend their acquaintanceship, in the awareness that there is much that we shall have to come to understand, in our diverse experience in these last three years. For this we do not need to be given orders, but we need facilities.[2]

NOTES

1. Written in late Sept 1943, this article was first printed in *La Revue du monde libre*, 11 (Nov 1943), 11-13, a pocket-sized London-based periodical dropped over occupied France by the Royal Air Force in 1943-44. TSE wrote to John Hayward on 4 Oct 1943: "Last week I had to write a few pages to offer to the air-service periodical dropped over France in large numbers." TSE's original text, in English, was put into French by an unidentified translator and given the title "Des organes publics et privés de la coopération intellectuelle" [On Public and Private Institutions of Intellectual Cooperation], shortened on the front cover to "La Coopération intellectuelle." In *Fontaine*, the title given on the wrapper is "De la coopération intellectuelle." Founded in 1939 by the writer and critic Max-Pol Fouchet, the Algiers-based *Fontaine* was a literary organ of the French Resistance.

The original English text, printed here below the published French translation, has survived as an untitled seven-page TS.

2. Extracts from this essay were revised and broadcast, along with a reading from *Little Gidding*, by the BBC French Service for the series "Demi-heure du soir" on 8 Nov 1944. The TS (2pp, Caversham) bears the title "De la coopération intellectuelle." TSE commented on this broadcast in a letter to John Hayward of 12 Nov 1944: "There was not time to let you know of my broadcast in French last week, as they made the recording on Tuesday and broadcast it on Wednesday. It was a selection of bits, ingeniously made by them, from my *Fontaine* article."

Books Across the Sea[1]

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (9 Nov 1943) 5

Sir, – In your issue of October 30 you reported, and commented upon in a leading article, the "British Book Week" sponsored by the American Library Association, which took place throughout the United States from October 24 to 30.[2] As the New York Circle of "Books Across the Sea" gave its assistance to this campaign, I hope that you will allow me to call attention to the work being done by these "circles" in New York, London, Boston, and Edinburgh.[3]

Since the beginning of the war it has become very difficult to obtain in England books of value and of topical importance published in America, with the exception of the small number which can be republished here. The same difficulty affects British books in America. "Books Across the Sea" was founded to supply this need: there is a rapidly growing library of American books here, and of British books in America.[4] The American circles have found a keen demand for the numerous British books dealing with problems of post-war reconstruction; also for books concerned with the British peoples and their institutions, and for school and educational books. The circles have also found themselves called upon to provide information – our London Circle alone receives an average of 126 inquiries about America every month.

It appears certain that the usefulness of these circles will not end with the war, and that their scope may have to be extended.[5] Each circle is autonomous, and is supported partly by memberships and partly by benefactions. There is need both for more members and for generous friends. I have omitted, from consideration of space, much information which I should have liked to give; so I suggest that any of your readers who are interested to know more should communicate with the Secretary of the London Circle at this address, or (according to their domicile) with the Edinburgh Circle, at the American Centre, 29, Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT, President of the Circle in England

Books Across the Sea, London Headquarters and
America Reading Room, Aldwych House, W.C.2

NOTES

1. TSE dates this letter Nov 6.

2. "British Book Week in America," *The Times* (30 Oct 1943), 3; and "Meet the English," *The Times* (30 Oct 1943), 5.

3. On Books Across the Sea and TSE's election to the presidency of its London circle, see his inaugural message (6.418).

4. Reporting the selection of Allan Nevins as honorary president of the New York circle, the *New York Times* noted on 11 Sept 1943: "T. S. Eliot is the new president of the corresponding circle in England, founded in 1941 by Americans in London. The American reading room of the circle in London . . . now contains more than 1,300 books on the United States of America" (11).

5. This prediction would prove correct, as Books Across the Sea gained in popularity after the war. The English-Speaking Union took over its administration in 1947, and a globally expanded program remains in existence today.

Message to *Aguedal*[1]

Aguedal, 7 (Dec 1943) 27

Cher Monsieur Ignace Legrand, – Je sens l'honneur que vous me faites en m'invitant à contribuer à ce « message » que vous préparez pour le prochain numéro d'*Aguedal*.[2] Message qui, hélas, ne peut être qu'un témoignage.

En effet, même les écrivains, comme tant d'autres hommes plus utiles, voient leurs temps pris, pendant la guerre, par des obligations étrangères à celles qu'ils subiraient avec plaisir et auxquelles ils accorderaient plus volontiers toute leur attention.

Puisse ce message exprimer au moins l'espoir d'une collaboration future pour cette œuvre restauratrice de la culture européenne dans laquelle les écrivains ont de grands devoirs à remplir, quoiqu'ils soient, eux, « les écrivains » les moins en vedette de tous ceux qui prennent la plume. Parmi ces devoirs en voici un (et il n'est pas des moindres, mais des plus importants) : nous devons rappeler aux hommes qu'il existe d'autres valeurs que celles de la politique et des luttes pour le pouvoir. Et pour accomplir ce devoir, l'un des instruments le plus fort est le périodique littéraire.

En ce qui concerne la maintenance de la culture européenne, j'ai toujours affirmé qu'une association et une amitié étroites entre les hommes de lettres français et anglais étaient d'une importance capitale. J'ai toujours lutté (car j'ai été aussi un éditeur) pour cette compréhension et cette sympathie mutuelles. C'est le retour à ces relations, que, moi et beaucoup d'autres avec moi, à Londres, nous avons attendu pendant ces années où l'on ne pouvait rien faire qu'attendre. Je puis vous assurer que, pour nous, la cessation de ce commerce a été fort grave. Et j'attends avec impatience *Aguedal* comme l'oiseau annonciateur d'un printemps heureux.

T. S. ELIOT

ORIGINAL ENGLISH TEXT

My dear Monsieur Legrand, – I am honoured by your invitation to contribute a "message" to the forthcoming number of *Aguedal*[2] – a message which can be, alas, no more than a token: for even men of letters, like more necessary people, have many claims upon their time, during the war, besides those to which they yield with alacrity and to which they would most

willingly give their attention. May this message express at least the hope of future collaboration, in that work of restoration of European culture in which writers – though "writers" be the least conspicuous of those who write – have an important task. Not the least of our tasks is to remind the peoples that there are other values than those expressed in the politics and the struggle for power; and not the least, but among the most important tools for these tasks, will be the literary periodicals.

In the maintenance of European culture, I have always affirmed that close associations and friendships between French and English men of letters were of primary importance; for such understanding and sympathy I have always striven (for I also have been an editor!); for the renewal of these relations I, like many in London, have waited during these years in which there was nothing to do but wait. I assure you, that to us the loss of this intercourse has been very grave. I look forward to *Aguedal* as the harbinger of a happier spring.

With fraternal greetings,
Yours very sincerely,
[T. S. ELIOT]

NOTES

1. Published in French. TSE's original one-page TS, written in English and dated 8 Aug 1943, is addressed to "Monsieur Ignace Legrand / 85, Woodside, / Wimbeldon, S. W. 19." *Aguedal*, a bimonthly literary review edited by Henri Bosco, was published 1936-44 in Rabat, Morocco, by the Société des amis des lettres et des arts au Maroc. The magazine was named for the Aguedal Gardens in Marrakech, dating from the twelfth century.

2. Ignace Legrand (pseudonym for Ferdinand Ignace Albert Warschawsky, 1884-1969), was a French colonial writer born in Nouméa, New Caledonia. He was a lifelong Anglophile. When Legrand solicited a contribution to *Aguedal*, TSE, who was about to embark on a two-week vacation, responded through his secretary on 28 June 1943 that he had "nothing suitable prepared at the moment" but hoped "to be able to let you have something at a later date." The result was this note. Pressed for a further contribution, TSE offered the journal permission to publish a section of *Little Gidding*. In the end, *Aguedal* published a translation of the full poem by André Gide and Madeleine Bosco, the editor's wife, in the same Dec 1943 issue as TSE's letter.

Responsibility and Power

The Christian News-Letter, 196 (1 Dec 1943), Supplement [1-4]

My Dear Oldham,

You have suggested that I should try to arrange on paper some of my haphazard reflections on the subject of responsibility and power.[1] Your readers may reasonably expect such a topic to be pursued within the framework already set by your supplement of September 8th on "Responsibility in the Economic System," and by Mr. Basil Smallpeice's valuable contribution of April 21st on "The Managers of Industry."[2] But the investigation of the situation in industry, commerce and finance must be developed, and the suggestions for its improvement made, by those whose minds are more versed in economic theory, and better furnished with illustrations from various types of business, than mine: I could refer only to the publishing industry, which is a very special case. On the other hand, there seems to be a place for a general consideration of the two terms *responsibility* and *power*, for which there is some advantage in being unencumbered by knowledge of industrial details. In your supplement of September 8th to which I have referred, mention is made of a widespread suspicion of hidden nefariousness in economic power, and a common yearning to see it replaced, or strictly controlled, by political power: this gives some justification for examining the two terms responsibility and power in greater abstraction.[3]

We may perhaps come at the meaning of *responsibility* more readily if we consider it in relation to the meaning of *irresponsibility*. By irresponsibility we may mean one of two things, which the context usually makes clear enough. When we speak of a dictator or despot as irresponsible, we may mean simply that there is no other power to which he is *accountable*: he may be prudent, just, wise and firm; he may be more benevolent and beloved than a fabulous Haroun al Raschid; he may immolate his private life to the well-being of his subjects – yet in so far as his power is absolute, it can truly be called "irresponsible."[4] In practice, of course (we need not quote Lord Acton again) this irresponsibility is likely, is almost certain, to be attended by, to give rise to, what we call moral *irresponsibility*.[5] Even if he be a well-meaning man, not addicted to any of the grosser abuses of tyranny, the despot may confound person and position, overrate his own wisdom, excuse faults in himself which he would not tolerate in a subject, and, in short, instead of identifying himself with his people, identify his people with himself.

The pure tyrant, such as I have just sketched, is an abstraction hardly realized except in the darker pages of oriental history. The modern political dictator usually owes his position in the first place to some moral ascendancy which he has gained over other men: his position may be attained by influence over the mob; it can only be preserved by influence over his lieutenants and over those minor centres of power whose compliance is essential to him. And *influence* is a form of power which is omnipresent: it is something which nearly everyone exercises in one relation of life or another; something indeed which no one can escape exercising, for a very large part of influence is unconscious both in the exertion and in the submission. A person who has never had the slightest influence on another could hardly be said to exist. The influence of the artist, as of the philosopher, is peculiar: he cannot do good work for the sake of the power of influence; when he is shown evidence of his particular influence on other artists or philosophers he may not recognize it, or he may be highly dissatisfied with the results: yet, he, like any other man, is greatly gratified by the thought that his work has been "influential."

I call attention to influence as power only as a caution against assuming that the different kinds of power can be wholly separated from each other. I return to the subject of the two senses of "responsibility." When we find anything wrong, for instance, in the economic sphere, we may assume: (1) there is nothing wrong with the system, but there is something wrong with *man*; (2) there is nothing wrong with the system, but the *men* who administer it are wrong 'uns; (3) what is wrong is not the men, still less mankind, but the system; (4) both the system and those who administer it are bad. These variations are playing on the meanings of "irresponsibility." In other words, we tend to think, at any moment, in terms of *it* or in terms of *they*, in terms of things or in terms of persons; or we may be thinking of things as if they were persons, and of persons as if they were things. And to think justly, we have to appreciate, in each concrete situation, which attitude is going to make affairs *better*. And we have to be always on guard for the moment at which *it* becomes *they*, or *they* become *it*. To put what I mean in these words is, I am well aware, a violent simplification. To present it with the necessary qualifications, I should have not only to analyse a particular situation, but to analyse the attitude of a hypothetical observer towards that situation.

Some years ago there was, in some quarters, a tendency to believe that politics was all a matter of economics, and that the affairs of the nation would be more efficiently handled if the politicians were dismissed and replaced by business men. It would be just as mistaken to imagine that a thoroughgoing subordination of business to politics would solve our difficulties. For there are several types of power, each with its own sphere; and it is not healthy, in a commonwealth, when any one type of power exercises unlimited sway – even if the centre of that power is denominated "the people." There is the power of the politicians, the power of the military, of the judiciary, of the various industrial, agricultural and other material interests; the powers of the journalist and even of the artist must not be overlooked; and finally the power of the Church. The areas are not clearly defined; it is better that they should not be; for in an active society, we must expect each centre of power to claim rather more than is appropriate to it, and the balance to be preserved by a wholesome contest. But in general it seems right that power should be specialized, and that those who exercise power in one sphere should *recognize authority* over themselves in other spheres. It is power arrogating other powers to itself, *power* in the generalized form, that arouses our most passionate sense of grievance. And there is, it seems to me, the need for an examination of cases of mixed power, and of overlapping power, in the contemporary world. Notably in the press. Under what conditions is the power of the owners (or of the managers) liable to encroach upon the powers of the editor? The situation of journalism provides a peculiarly interesting problem of areas of power in our time.

I should like to make clear that I am not here concerned with the problems that arise from any one individual or group acquiring *too much* power, but with those which arise from the possession and exercise of power *inappropriate* to an individual or group. And I do not wish to flatter the prejudices of those (for instance) who hold that the legislature and the administration should have *no* control over "private enterprise." Such persons are often defining areas according to their own convenience; and cases are not unknown in which people who have wanted "freedom" in one context have wanted "protection" in another – sometimes quite justly, but nevertheless, protection is also control. As the world is constantly in change anyway, we are obliged to make deliberate changes, from time to time, if only to preserve. It is only wisdom – which is able to grasp both the permanent and the immediate – which can safeguard us from both the *doctrinaire* and the merely expedient; and if wisdom fails, there is no use in worrying about anything. Anyone will have quite misunderstood the foregoing outline if he supposes that it is intended to give any direct guidance as to what we should do, or what we should leave undone, at the present time. If the reader then asks, "So of what value can be such ruminations as these?" I am afraid that I have not here the space, or the time, for elucidation: for those who are anxious to get something done are often impatient with those who, while they may accept the programme, linger over abstract notions of what a good society would be like.

The commonalty is in good health when there is an effective harmony of interests, such that the rulers, acting in their own interest, are also acting in the interest of those whom they rule. Such a harmony of interests (even with a great deal of incidental selfishness, exploitation and oppression) always exists, or appears to exist, when any ruling class is flourishing in undisputed power; it is temporarily in evidence at any moment of national crisis. In course of time one of two things may happen, or both: the ruling class may lose its grasp of its own essential interests, and exercise its power only in a narrow and blind self-interest; or the social circumstances may so alter, through economic or other developments, that the centre of political power shifts, or should shift, to another class. The real crime of the French aristocracy of the old regime was not that it claimed the rights of *le mariage de Figaro*, or committed the picturesque excesses made familiar by Carlyle, but that it had ceased to have visible interests in common with the mass of the people.[6]

A healthy ruling class may be said to have an "unconscious" sense of responsibility – to put it in the form of paradox. Its power, if it is political power, will be limited by the authority of other centres of power, as well as by constitutional and legislative restraints. This "unconscious responsibility," through a lucky community of interest with the rest of the people, is all that we can expect of most of the members of the class; but I do not think that such a class can thrive long unless it produces individuals, superior to itself, who have a high and very conscious sense of moral responsibility both to their fellow-men of all classes and to God; and unless these superior individuals, by the example they set and the influence they exert, impose a kind of respect for moral law upon the other members of their class who are less sensitive. Such a sense of social responsibility can, furthermore, be transmitted by domestic influence from one generation to another; on the other hand, it may easily decay. There is no recipe for social stability.

This pattern of powers in society, in which each individual, and each group of individuals, exercises an appropriate power and to the proper exercise of other powers gives its assent (ideally, intelligent and understanding assent) seems to me to illustrate the nature of "justice" in the Platonic sense. (Nobody can be quite sure how other people's domestic business is carried on; but I imagine that a successful *ménage* is one in which the couple, as a couple, delegates, partly by a process of trial and error, authority in different matters to one or the other partner, according to their different capacities.) To point to a society in which this "justice" has been perfectly exemplified is impossible; we arrive at an apprehension of it rather by studying the decline of justice through which societies have fallen into disorder – either the transgression of power beyond its proper limits, or the abdication of it within them, leads to revolutionary disaffection. Often the discontent expresses itself in a clamour for "equality," which simply represents the swing of the pendulum the other way.

I may have put these reflections both too abstractly and too dogmatically: if so, the fault comes through trying to say too much in a little space. Whether they appear to have any bearing on the important problems with which you are concerned, I do not know; my aim was to indicate a farther perspective from which it might be profitable, now and again, to contemplate them.

Yours sincerely,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. This essay originated in a series of letters from TSE to J. H. Oldham, dated 9 Aug, 14 Aug, 21 Aug, and 29 Aug 1943. The immediate occasion for this correspondence was a paper by H. A. Hodges detailing "Fifteen points of agreement" that, he believed, had emerged from the recent (18-21 June) meeting of the Moot, which TSE had attended. Headed "Christianity and Society" and dated 24 June, Hodges's document included such principles as "1. All power ought to be socially responsible"; "11. Human conduct is governed by the self-interest of individuals and groups aiming at possession, power, comfort and reputation, no less than by ideal motives or a sense of public duty"; and "12. Therefore struggle and opposition are an irremovable element in human life and especially in political life."

2. Basil Smallpeice (1906-92), English businessman, was a member of the Christian Frontier Council, a discussion group, founded by Oldham in 1942, that focused on the place of religion in practical life. Smallpeice's essay "The Managers of Industry" was published in *CN-L*, 180 (21 Apr 1943), Supplement [1-4].

"Responsibility in the Economic System," *CN-L*, 190 (8 Sept 1943), Supplement 1-8, was "prepared," according to Oldham's introductory note, "by a small group associated with the Christian Frontier, the members of which are all connected in one way or another with industry and are all young. The purpose of the present paper is to define the problem by an analysis of economic power and its relevance to existing conditions. No suggestions of reforms or remedies are put forward at this stage. The group intends to continue the study of the subject."

3. The Supplement of 8 Sept addresses the "widespread . . . belief that democracy is a sham, that the whole system is manipulated by 'sinister vested interests,' that effective power does not lie with a responsible parliament, but with an irresponsible clique of financiers and directors, and that any proposals for reform and reconstruction which do not alter the effective control of power are just sops to keep ordinary people quiet" (1).

4. Haroun al-Raschid (763-809), fifth Abbasid Caliph and figure of legend.

5. John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, First Baron Acton (1834-1902), British historian. TSE alludes to his famous aphorism, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

6. The *droit du seigneur* – the alleged (but probably fictional) right of a medieval lord to deflower all virgins on his estate – figures prominently in Pierre Beaumarchais's comedy *La Folle Journée ou le Mariage de Figaro*. Because of its satire of aristocracy and its privileges, the play, written in 1778, was suppressed until 1784. For Thomas Carlyle's portrayal of a decadent French nobility, see the first volume of *The French Revolution* (1837).

T. S. Eliot on Kipling's Anti-Semitism[1]

To the Editors of *The Nation*

The Nation, 158 (15 Jan 1944) 83

Dear Sirs, – Your issue of October 16 has only recently reached me, containing Lionel Trilling's interesting and, I think, valuable essay on my volume of selections of Kipling's verse.[2] Mr. Trilling permits himself the following observation:

> Mr. Eliot, it is true, would not descend to the snippy, *persecuted* anti-Semitism of ironic good manners which, in "The Waster," leads Kipling to write "etc." when the rhyme requires "Jew";[3] but Mr. Eliot must have been at some trouble to procure the poem for his selection, for it is not included in the Inclusive Edition. [442]

I used, in making my selection, the "Definitive Edition" published by Hodder and Stoughton in London. I am informed that this edition is published in New York by Doubleday, Doran and Company, and that Mr. Trilling can find the poem in question on page 525 of the 1940 impression.[4]

Second, I would observe that in one stanza, at least, the rhyme required is not to "do" but to "done": and the obvious rhyme for "done" is not "Jew" but "Hun."[5] Kipling made several opportunities for expressing his dislike of Germans; I am not aware that he cherished any particularly anti-Semitic feelings. In any case, the interest of the poem lies rather in his criticism of the English than in any aversion to Jews, Germans, or Scotsmen that may be imputed to him.[6]

T. S. ELIOT

London

NOTES

[1] TSE's letter is dated 15 Dec 1943.

[2] The American literary and social critic Lionel Trilling (1905-75) reviewed the U.S. edition of TSE's *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* in *The Nation*, 157 (16 Oct 1943), 436, 440, 442. Trilling criticizes TSE's introduction to the volume (6.210) for whitewashing Kipling's politics; these, he writes, "are not a matter of formulations but of tone, overtone, emphasis, and color, none of which Mr. Eliot notices. . . . In short, Kipling is unloved and unlovable, not by reason of

his beliefs, but by reason of the temperament that gave them literary expression. Of this temperament Mr. Eliot seems quite unaware" (440).

3. The first stanza of "The Waster" (1930) sets the pattern for the rest:

From the date that the doors of his prep-school close
  On the lonely little son
He is taught by precept, insult, and blows
  The Things that Are Never Done.
Year after year, without favour or fear,
  From seven to twenty-two,
His keepers insist he shall learn the list
  Of the things no fellow can do.
(They are not so strict with the average Pict
  And it isn't set to, etc.)

4. For this information TSE sought the help of William P. Watt, the literary agent who had been his contact in the negotiations over *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*. "I hope you can help me settle a puzzling problem," he wrote on 2 Dec 1943. "I want to write to the *Nation* and say that I did not go out of my way to find this poem because I stuck to the definitive collected edition. . . . Now, the text which I used was torn to pieces by our Production Department and our volume was printed from that. This dismembered volume has disappeared. I have another copy of the Hodder and Stoughton collected edition and I am damned if I can find this poem at all. There must be some difference between the editions: can you supply evidence that this poem did appear in the collected edition?"

5. In the second stanza, lines ending with "won" and "Done" suggest that the suppressed final word is indeed "Hun.'" The concluding third stanza returns to rhymes with "Jew."

6. With TSE's letter, the *Nation* published Trilling's reply, in which the critic accepted TSE's explanation, observing that while the 1938 edition, which Trilling had consulted, omitted "The Waster," the 1940 edition did indeed include it. "I therefore owe Mr. Eliot an apology, which I offer sincerely." He demurred nonetheless to TSE's defense of the poem: "The gist of 'The Waster' is that the English, because of their public-school code, are always being beaten by certain unscrupulous racial groups." Even if Kipling was not, as TSE put it, "particularly anti-Semitic," his "queasy, resentful feelings about Jews," Trilling concluded, were "one aspect of a complex xenophobia" (83).

Trilling's edition, lacking "The Waster," was *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Inclusive Edition* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1938); TSE's, in which "The Waster" appears on 525-26, is *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940).

Reunion: Construction or Destruction?

Mr. T. S. Eliot's Reply

The Church of England Newspaper (21 Jan 1944) 13

The Editor of the *Church of England Newspaper* has kindly invited me to comment upon the article by Canon T. Guy Rogers, which appeared in last week's issue under the title of "Reunion: Destruction or Construction?"[1] In this article Canon Rogers addresses himself, with urbanity and courteousness, to the task of defending the South India Scheme for Church Union against the objections which I raised.[2] Canon Rogers could not concern himself, in so brief an article, with exhibiting any positive arguments in favour of this scheme. He was only concerned to demolish my arguments against it. It is therefore only possible for me, in the same space, to occupy myself with his refutation of these same arguments. I should like the reader to be aware that the subject of Canon Rogers' article and of this article, is not the South India Scheme, but my particular observations upon it. And with the best will in the world on both sides, I fear that Canon Rogers and I cannot come to an understanding. We do not talk the same language: the reader can only decide which language he finds more intelligible.

"SOCIETIES" OR "CHURCHES"

Canon Rogers first objects to my qualification of dissenting bodies as "societies" rather than "churches."[3] Well, in my pamphlet I tried to distinguish between different and confusing uses of the word *church*. I said that some Christians held one view and some another. What Canon Rogers' words may suggest to the reader is that the interpretation which offends him is an innovation of my own. He quotes some words of a Lambeth Conference in commendation of "the great non-episcopal communions," which seem to me to have no bearing on my point, and then says he knows of no "manifesto" carrying any authority which would suggest that the Free Churches are only "societies" [1]. Nor do I know of any manifesto which in clear and unambiguous language affirms the contrary. But this appeal to manifestoes seems a little odd to me: I would remind Canon Rogers that many of the Doctors of the Church are dead, and some of them have been dead a long time. However this may be, my purpose was to put two different views: it was for Canon Rogers to say first whether he agrees that these two views are actually maintained; and then, if he wished, to defend his own.

Canon Rogers says that my sentence "let us unite in the hope that in thirty years' time we shall agree" is a *travesty*.[4] If he had said that it was only *partially* true, or that it was an *exaggeration*, I should have considered this fair criticism. But a *travesty?* Why? Because, it seems, twenty years of patient discovery have been devoted to the preparation of the draft constitution. That the framers of the scheme have been patient, I should be the last to deny; that they have discovered anything worth the search is for Canon Rogers to persuade us. He declares that "the amount of agreement already reached" (*already?* then if the agreement is not complete, what becomes of the "travesty"?) "is *miraculous* in the eyes of many" [1].[5] I should myself wish to employ the word "miraculous" with more circumspection: perhaps there are those who would call the South India Constitution miraculous, who yet are not believers in "miracles" in the Bible. But I will not call his use of the word "miraculous" a "travesty" – merely an exaggeration. Again, he says that the framers of the scheme (I presume) are led "both by faith and reason." I do not impute any lack of faith – that would be to suggest a lack of sincerity – but for their being led by reason, we have only Canon Rogers' assurance. No doubt, as he says, who is right and who is wrong can only be proved by experience: *verification* is generally accepted as the final test of any theory. If we lose our way in the dark on the edge of a quagmire, we can comfort ourselves with the phrase *solvitur ambulando*, for the moment will certainly come when we need no longer *argue* about the right direction.[6]

EPISCOPACY

As for the two different views of episcopacy – whether it is of "divine appointment" or whether it is simply a form of government which has, in the past, proved the best, I was merely concerned to expose the fact that the South India Scheme does not reconcile them. I readily agree with Canon Rogers that there are many people who do not adopt exclusively one opinion or the other. He is himself an example of this intermediate point of view, the existence of which I had no design to conceal from the reader; for his own view of "divine appointment" is extremely obscure. A divine appointment, such as episcopacy, may have (he tells us) "many shades of meaning"; it may be "conditioned by time or place or the historical process" (whatever the historical process may be); it may be "brought into conflict with other divine appointments" [1]. In short, divine appointment is so hedged about with reservations that we cannot tell what it means, or whether it means anything at all. For Canon Rogers it appears to mean any "high view of episcopacy"; and perhaps, in the same sense, Parliamentary Government is of divine appointment, too.

My last criticism of Canon Rogers' argument is, that in his effort, not to prove that the South India Scheme is a good one, but that my own mind (although it errs by being "very exact" and even "tidy") is confused if not actually disingenuous, has to press some of my words for a literalness of meaning which surprises me.[7] Divine appointment may be "conditioned by time and space," but my phrases have no such privilege. Thus, when I said that I appealed to the reader who would not wish to see the Church of England transformed or made unfamiliar, he assumes that to be consistent I must resolutely oppose *any* change within the Church of England. Pursuing this implication a little further, he might affirm that I ought to object to the introduction of any beautiful ornament, or the removal of any hideous ornament from any church in the country, on the ground that such a change would make the church unfamiliar. The Church of England, according to my defence, says Canon Rogers, is tolerant, and I pretend to wish it to remain so: how, then, can I object to the "tolerance and comprehensiveness" of South India?

I am sorry that Canon Rogers is not pleased with my comparison of the pantomime horse.[8] The pantomime horse is a creation of formalised disorder. When it first appears upon the stage, its two pairs of feet make some pretense of co-operation; as the farce proceeds, they manifest increasing differences of purpose; and by the end of the scene the two halves of the horse may depart from the stage by different wings. There are other aspects of the South India Scheme, as Canon Rogers has been quick to note, in which other comparisons present themselves to the mind.[9] Canon Rogers appears shocked that I should treat a serious matter with what he considers levity. I can only say that I fear the reader who cannot see the seriousness of the levity will also fail to appreciate the seriousness of the dangers about which I am apprehensive.[10]

NOTES

1. T. Guy Rogers, "Reunion: Destruction or Construction?," *The Church of England Newspaper* (14 Jan 1944), 1-2. Rogers (1876-1967), was an Anglo-Irish clergyman and author, a leader of the modernizing Anglican Evangelical Church Movement, and rector of St. Martin in the Bull Ring, Birmingham. Among the works he authored or co-authored were *The Inner Life:*

Essays in Liberal Evangelicalism (1925), *Christ in the Changing World* (1932), and the later *A Rebel at Heart: The Autobiography of a Nonconforming Churchman* (1956).

On the day Rogers's critique was published in the *Church of England Newspaper*, editor Eric Upward sent a copy to TSE and invited a response "in time for next week's issue," giving TSE four days to pen his rebuttal. The section titles in the published article were editorially inserted.

2. I.e., in *Reunion by Destruction* (6.447). On the controversy over the scheme for a unified Church of South India, see the introduction to this volume (6.xxxiii-xxxiv).

3. In *Reunion by Destruction*, TSE explains that he uses the word "church" to refer to the one "'visible Church' founded by Jesus Christ and living continuously since its foundation"; in contrast, Nonconformists "tend to think" of religious bodies "rather as societies or associations, of a voluntary nature, which a man may join or leave at will" (6.457). Although TSE carefully presents this distinction as deriving as much from the Protestant perspective as from the Anglo-Catholic, it conforms to the view of the latter that a continuous link from the Biblical apostles to the modern episcopacy (i.e., apostolic succession) is fundamental to the legitimacy of the Church.

4. TSE writes: "But the principle of the South India Scheme is not 'we agree, therefore let us unite,' but 'let us unite, in the hope that in thirty years' time we shall agree.' The expectation is that if several bodies determine to behave, for thirty years, as if they were one, they will become one" (6.457).

5. The italicization of "miraculous" is TSE's.

6. *Solvitur ambulando*: literally, "it is solved by walking" (i.e., experimentation will produce a solution). Rogers had used the phrase in suggesting that the efficacy of the South India scheme could not "be proved except by experience" (1).

7. Rogers found it "doubtful whether Mr. Eliot's very exact mind, which is apt to pose antitheses and dilemmas where they do not necessarily exist, could ever be really sympathetic with the weaving and interweaving of any reunion scheme which could command practical success" (1). He spoke skeptically of TSE's "expressed desire to see [the Church] neither transformed nor made unfamiliar": "With his catholic sense and tidy mind he might have been expected to desire a much more 'totalitarian' type of churchmanship than our Church presents" (1-2).

8. Rogers reacted against a passage in TSE's peroration: "No generous mind can welcome the task of denouncing the results of twenty years of devoted labour, on the part of such Christian men as the designers of the South India Scheme; no ingenuous heart can fail to be moved by the spectacle of such waste. Twenty patient years to build what is only an elaborate artifice! Twenty years to construct a pantomime horse!" (6.466). "[I]t would seem that [for TSE] anything is better than that the South India Scheme should go through," Rogers wrote, "and whether it is killed by solemn warning or by pleasantry is a minor matter. Thus after describing its tragic consequences for the Church of England, Mr. Eliot suddenly likens the scheme itself to a pantomime horse" (2).

9. "We could understand him better," Rogers had remarked of TSE, "if he had likened the scheme to a Trojan horse, which is the way in which so many Anglo-Catholics seem to regard it."

10. Although the editor had offered TSE the front page of the *Church of England Newspaper*, his reply to Rogers was relegated to page 13, and the first two pages were devoted instead to a defense of the South Indian scheme by Norman Tubbs, Dean of Chester. Further defenses appeared among the articles and correspondence in the issues that followed, including

statements by James T. Inskip, Bishop of Barking, and William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury. In a letter published on 4 Feb under the heading "T. S. Eliot and South India," C. Sydney Carter of Clifton Theological College responds to TSE's statement "that he knows of no authoritative 'manifesto' which affirms that non-episcopal bodies are 'Churches'" by pointing to Canon 55 of the Church of England, a 1604 document "which authorizes a prayer for 'Christ's holy catholic Church . . . and especially for the Church of Scotland'" (7).

Mr. Butler's National Christianity

To the Editor of *The Church Times*

The Church Times (28 Jan 1944) 43

Sir, – The *Times* of January 11, and the *Times Educational Supplement* of January 15, contain brief reports of an address by the President of the Board of Education to the Board of Deputies of British Jews.[1] I have not the copy of the *Times* by me, but the *Educational Supplement* has the following sentence:

> Mr. Butler contemplated that where necessary the Jewish representative should be called into the deliberations for framing an agreed syllabus of religious instruction under the seventh schedule of the Bill.[2]

I do not know whether the full text of this speech is anywhere available; but I have nowhere seen any editorial comment upon it. Perhaps you or one of your contributors can throw light upon the meaning of the statements attributed to Mr. Butler in the reports which I have seen.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

Shamley Green, Surrey

NOTES

1. "The State and Education," *The Times* (11 Jan 1944), 2; and "Education and the Future," *TES* (15 Jan 1944), 30.

2. The "Bill": i.e., the 1944 Education Act, often referred to as the Butler Act after the Conservative politician Richard Austen ("Rab") Butler (1902-82), who, as president of the national Board of Education, guided the controversial proposal to passage. A comprehensive reform measure, the Act instituted universal, free secondary education in the United Kingdom and restructured the education system and its administration. According to the *TES*, Butler stated in an address of 10 Jan 1944 "that he had discussed the lines for safeguarding the future of the denominational schools and of [*sic*] improving the quality of religious instruction in all schools with leaders of all the denominations." The sentence TSE quotes concludes: ". . . but the training given in the schools needed supplementing by training to be given by parents and by the Churches" (30).

The *Church Times* had recently condemned the Butler Act for its ecumenism in its editorial of 14 Jan, titled "Christian Education under the Bill." The editors – supported subsequently by various correspondents – argued that the bill effectively institutionalized Nonconformism, undermining the status of the Anglican Church as the British state church (18). TSE's letter appeared in the *Church Times* against this backdrop.

3. In “Mr. Butler’s National Religion” (4 Feb), the editors of the *Church Times* report that they “made special inquiry at the Board of Education,” where they received “confirmation of Mr. Butler’s words”: “Agreed syllabuses are planned to vary from district to district; and in places where there is an appreciable Jewish community, the Local Authority, under the Bill, will call representative Jewish educationalists with representatives of the [established] Church and Nonconformity, and these together will be asked to agree on a form or forms of Scriptural instruction.” The editors characterize the “neutral” religious instruction likely to result from such agreements as “a shameless fraud, designed to establish not merely a new form of State-endowed Dissent, but a national religion which is a travesty of Christianity” (62).

Aristocracy[1]

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (17 Apr 1944) 5

Sir, – In the leading article which you devote, in your issue of April 13, to Sir Walter Moberly's address to the Classical Association, you look forward to the formation of "an aristocracy drawn from all sections of society."[2] It is to be presumed that an aristocracy drawn from all sections of society will include some members of the aristocracy; so that an inspection of the two meanings of the word "aristocracy" is invited.

The traditional use of the word implies, I believe, an emphasis upon inheritance: not merely the inheritance of property, however important that may seem to some, but the inheritance, partly through biological transmission and partly through environment, of other less tangible values. In other words, the unit of aristocracy, in the sense in which the word has been used in the past, is not the individual but the family. In the new sense of the word (and the phrase "the new aristocracy" is acquiring currency) inheritance is ignored, and the family implicitly depreciated. We are to have an aristocracy, not of families, but of individuals; and these individuals will have been turned into aristocrats, not by their parents, but by their schoolmasters, employing some system of selection to be elaborated. I suggest that this may be a more violent mutation of meaning than any word ought to be required to undergo. It will not do to appeal, behind the back of tradition, to the etymological sense of the word; for government by the best men is surely the aspiration of every society, whatever its social organization.[3]

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

Shamley Green, Surrey

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[1] TSE dated this letter 14 Apr.

[2] Sir Walter Hamilton Moberly (1881-1974), philosopher and academic administrator. With TSE, he was a regular participant in the Moot. Moberly was a longtime member of the Church of England Commission on Christian doctrine, the Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life, and the Christian Frontier Council; he was also, from 1934, president of the

University Grants Committee and thus a key player in the distribution of higher-education funding.

Moberly's address to the Classical Association, delivered at St. Albans, 12 Apr 1944, was published as *Plato's Conception of Education and its Meaning for To-day* (1944). The leading article to which TSE responds here, titled "Lessons from Plato," mixes paraphrase of and quotation from Moberly's address: "educational equality is impracticable so long as men differ in capacity. What must be avoided is differentiation on irrelevant grounds, such as family connexions or parental income; and it is precisely this reproach, it may be added, which the present educational reforms are designed to remove. When equality of opportunity is no longer an aim but an achievement, and what remains of economic privilege in education has been swept away, an aristocracy drawn from all sections of society cannot be out of sympathy with the masses from which it has sprung" (5). The relevant passages appear in *Plato's Conception of Education* (26-27); however, the aside on "present educational reforms" (i.e., the Butler Education Act) and the language pertaining to aristocracy are not Moberly's.

3. TSE's phrase "government by the best men" translates the Greek word "aristocracy," supplying its "etymological sense."

Books for the Freed World[1]

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (8 May 1944) 5

Sir, – I hope that Mr. Archibald MacLeish's proposals for "lending libraries on a world basis" outlined in his article in your issue of May 3, will be considered, discussed, and supported by every one concerned with scholarship and the arts and sciences.[2] It is with the desire to promote discussion and support that I write.

There are only two points in Mr. MacLeish's article which I should like to see expressed rather differently. He says that it will be necessary "to provide educational systems to replace those destroyed or perverted by the Fascists." For "Fascists," perhaps, we might read "Germans"; but it is the word "replace" that disturbs me. It is for the liberated nations to replace or restore as they choose: we should aim only to help them to do whichever they prefer. Later, Mr. MacLeish says: "To eradicate Fascism means to eradicate the conditions which produce Fascism. Of those, superstition and ignorance are not the least, nor the least dangerous." "Superstition" and "ignorance" mean such different things to different people, and in their modern forms can so plausibly simulate enlightenment and knowledge, that this phrase does not seem to me very helpful.

The suggestion that I wish to offer, however, is that the initiative in putting the cultural resources of each country at the disposal of all others should be taken by the universities – by intercourse between those universities of greater autonomy, antiquity, and prestige, in the countries from which aid is to come, and universities of the same standing in the devastated countries. Between universities – especially among European universities, and between those of Europe and America – there may survive that tradition of their common aims and ideals, which is older than the traditions of their local loyalties: and here is an opportunity for them to revive and strengthen it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

Books Across the Sea, The Circle in England,
Aldwych House, W.C.2

NOTES

1. TSE dated this letter 5 May. He sent it with a cover letter addressed to Robert Barrington-Ward, the editor of the *Times*: "I should not presume to offer the enclosed letter addressed to the Editor, so soon after the publication of a letter by me on a quite different subject, but that I happened to know that it would be very welcome to Mr. MacLeish if I did so. I shall therefore have discharged a duty of good will towards him, whether it is considered suitable to publish the enclosed letter or not." TSE's preceding letter to the *Times*, titled "Aristocracy," was published 17 Apr (6.499).

2. "A New Renaissance," *The Times* (3 May 1944), 5. Archibald MacLeish, American poet (1892-1982), was then Librarian of Congress. His article pointed out that in addition to the reconstruction of ravaged European infrastructure it would "be necessary also to reconstitute, in certain of the occupied countries, the entire fabric of intellectual intercourse – the nerve system by which ideas are communicated from one man to another and from one generation to the next." He was concerned, in particular, with the devastation of schools and, especially, libraries. Noting that "a great collection of books" is irreplaceable, his article advocated a systematic sharing of library resources – in essence, an extension of "interlibrary loan beyond national boundaries."

Introduction to *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*, by S. L. Bethell[1]

London: King and Staples, 1944. Pp. 164; Introduction, [7-9].

As the volume of Shakespeare criticism increases, year by year, the common reader must be inclined to wonder, what has all this to do with him? and to reiterate the objection, that what really matters is the plays themselves, and not what an endless succession of critics say about them. The science of textual criticism he admits, and pays a remote respect to the scholar who removes or inserts a comma; the discovery of another biographical fact is at least a sensation; and the structure of the Tudor and Jacobean stage is a question of legitimate archaeological curiosity. But of all these matters of investigation the common reader believes there must some day be an end: the prospect that the questions will be finally answered is the justification for asking them. But of interpretative criticism, which is the relating of historical fact to contemporary consciousness, there is no end; so the reader is tempted to ask, to what purpose is a journey without a terminus?

The answer to *this* question would itself have to take the form of a book – which itself would have to be succeeded, in a generation or two, by another book – on the history of Shakespeare criticism, exhibiting that criticism as a history, in one aspect, of the English and the European mind. We all know that Shakespeare has presented a different appearance to every age. In the work of any Shakespeare critic of the past we can see, when we have made the deduction of individual genius and individual limitations, the outlines of the consciousness of the critic's age. It is possible that one age may miss what a previous age had grasped. There are variations also, under the influence of a passing philosophy. One age may see Shakespeare more in the study, another more in the theatre. At a particular moment, and sometimes in a particular place, certain of the less popular plays may have a particular appeal: we remember the limited, but significant interest in *Troilus and Cressida* a few years ago.[2] But on the whole, we must assume (as posterity will assume after us) that we are in a better position to understand Shakespeare than any of our predecessors. This is not merely an assumption of the Shakespeare critic, or of the literary critic in general, but the assumption implicit in all historical study: that we understand the past better than previous generations did, simply because there is more of it. We assume, and must assume, a progressive development of consciousness.

The constant reader of Shakespeare should be also, to the best of his opportunities, the constant theatre-goer: for any play of Shakespeare requires to be seen and heard, as well as read, many times; and seen and heard in as many different productions as possible. But however much he frequents the theatre, he probably does not realise the extent to which stage production has been influenced by criticism. (His best approach might be the other way about, studying the *Prefaces* of Harley Granville-Barker for the contribution of a dramatist and producer to criticism.[3]) This influence is not necessarily quite direct; but it is possible that some future producer who has read this book by Mr. Bethell, will present a *Hamlet* rather different, in consequence, from previous *Hamlets*. Meanwhile, however, the reader may ask himself, why need I be conscious of all these things in Shakespeare's plays, of which Shakespeare himself was perhaps not quite conscious? Why can I not enjoy the play simply, as a contemporary would have done? The answer is, of course, that we cannot escape from the criticism of the past except through the criticism of the present.

The extent to which the past weighs upon us, and forces upon our attention problems which for the contemporary did not exist, has been brought home to me in attempting to cope with the difficulties of writing verse drama to-day. It is only a humble statement of fact, to say that the verse dramatist to-day has to be much more conscious of what he is doing than Shakespeare was, and, even to produce a result comparatively trifling, has to surmount obstacles which to Shakespeare were unknown. For instance, a poet, trying to write something for the theatre, discovers first of all that it is not only a question of labouring to acquire the technique of the theatre: it is a question of a different kind of poetry, a different kind of verse, than the kind for which his previous experience has qualified him. How, he must ask himself, would people to-day speak if they could speak in poetry? They cannot be translated to a fairyland where they may talk appropriately in verse; they must on your stage be able to perform the same actions, and lead the same lives, as in the real world. But they must somehow disclose (not necessarily be aware of) a deeper reality than that of the plane of most of our conscious living; and what they disclose must be, not the psychologist's intellectualisation of this reality, but the reality itself. And the poetry must express, in a way in which natural speech cannot, not only the reality of the individual, but the reality of a situation composed of a fusion, in sympathy or antipathy, of two or more individuals. A verse play is not a play done into verse, but a different kind of play: in a way more realistic than "naturalistic drama," because, instead of clothing nature in poetry, it should remove the surface of things, expose the underneath, or the inside, of the natural surface appearance. It may allow the characters to behave inconsistently, but only with respect to a deeper consistency. It may use any device to show their real feelings and volitions, instead of just what, in actual life, they would normally profess or be conscious of; it must reveal, underneath the vacillating or infirm character, the indomitable unconscious will; and underneath the resolute purpose of the planning animal, the victim of circumstance and the doomed or sanctified being. So the poet with ambitions of the theatre, must discover the laws, both of another kind of verse and of another kind of drama. The difficulty of the author is also the difficulty of the audience. Both have to be trained; both need to be conscious of many things which neither an Elizabethan dramatist, nor an Elizabethan audience, had any need to know; and if a book like Mr. Bethell's is helpful to the writer of verse plays, I am sure that it should be to those who hear and read them also.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Bethell submitted this book for consideration by Faber & Faber in 1940. In a letter of 10 Dec, TSE offered high praise: "I think that what I believe to be the capital point is a very interesting and important one: namely, that true poetic drama has its own laws which are not those of prose 'naturalistic' drama. And of the nature of the differences you give a valuable analysis. What you present is something that ought to be read and digested by all concerned in the production, acting, [and] criticising [of] Shakespeare performances; and by those (if there are any still) who are ambitious to write dramatic verse." His colleagues, however, did not think the book would sell. "I wish that it were otherwise: but perhaps it is rather a University Press book, nowadays."

Over the next three years, TSE advised and encouraged Bethell during his struggle to find a publisher and even made a second attempt to promote the book at Faber. On 28 Apr 1943, he agreed to write a preface, in part as a stratagem to help market the book to publishers. By Sept Bethell had secured a contract. TSE considered his essay, dated 19 Feb 1944, to be a preface but on 13 Apr permitted Bethell to call it an introduction.

2. TSE may be thinking of 1938, which saw a noteworthy production, which he attended, at the Westminster Theatre; a new edition by Bonamy Dobrée, who acknowledged TSE for his advice on its introduction; and TSE's acceptance for the *Criterion* of an article on the play by Una Ellis-Fermor. (TSE shut down the *Criterion* in Jan 1939, before he could publish the article,

but Ellis-Fermor included it in her book *The Frontiers of Drama* [1945].) Dobrée calls *Troilus and Cressida* one of Shakespeare's "greatest triumphs"; Ellis-Fermor likewise reckons it a "great play."

3. Harley Granville-Barker, English actor, director, and playwright. His *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (1927-45), a series of introductory essays, were admired for bringing the perspective of a theater professional to Shakespeare studies.

Broadcast on the liberation of Rome by the Allies

With US and Canadian forces advancing in Italy, TSE mentioned to John Hayward on 1 June 1944 that the BBC was "planning a broadcast to be recorded and canned against the fall of Rome." An invitation to speak had arrived the previous day from J. B. Clark: "In anticipation of the liberation of Rome we are anxious to prepare a special programme for use, of course, only after current military operations have achieved this success. We very much hope that you will be able to contribute a message stressing the debt of cultured peoples to Latin civilization." The BBC broadcast, titled "Program to Celebrate the Liberation of Rome," was produced by Robert Speaight.

American troops entered the city on 4 June, by which time TSE told Hayward he had "tapped out my 4 minutes on Rome." His address was recorded immediately and broadcast the following day. TSE's talk was preceded by an opening announcement:

> For twenty years the Eternal City has lain under the Fascist of the Nazi yoke. Today it is free. We now present a recording by T. S. Eliot, one of the foremost English poets and critics of today, President of the Virgil Society and ex-President of the Classical Association, who will speak of the European debt to Roman literature.

A note (initialed "T.S.E.") at the top of the TS reads, "Recorded Broadcast: given in the European Service, 5 June 1944, following the Archbishop of Westminster, G. M. Trevelyan, Col. Stevens and Lord Greene." A further talk by Gerald Wellesley, Duke of Wellington – whom Churchill had recently appointed chair of a commission for restoring the cultural monuments of Italy – was recorded but not used due to a late cut to the program.[1] The broadcast was repeated on 19 June over the BBC's Eastern Service – Purple Network.

I am to speak of the debt of all European peoples to Rome, for the literature she has given us, and for the literature which she has helped us to create. It is a debt different, not in degree, but in kind, from that which we owe to any other civilisation. When we talk of the "debt" of one culture to another, we do not mean the kind of debt which can be repaid: yet we are apt to think of it as a debt which has been settled. We think of it as a debt incurred by our ancestors: we imagine that the debt is now written off, and that the books are now closed. Our debt to Rome is not like that: it is one which must be renewed and magnified in every generation. In thinking of this debt to Roman literature, you will think first, no doubt, of the debt of your own country: whether your country be mine, or any other land of Europe, you will reflect upon the difference to your literature, if your poets had never read any Latin poetry; of the difference to your education, if the Latin language had never been taught in your schools; of the difference to the language you speak, if the Latin language had never been spoken. But it is not of our several debts that I wish to remind you, but of our common debt. It is the formation given us in the past, the tradition of Latin culture which we have in common, together with our common religion, that created the European consciousness, the common mind in which we are Europeans. If the claims of this cultural kinship, which is Europe, and this spiritual kinship, which is Christendom,[2†] are to be respected; if the mutual bonds which have been forgotten in peace, before they were broken in war, are to be re-affirmed; we must not only acknowledge our debt to Rome in the past, but maintain and multiply it in the future.

To Rome we owe – and now in sorrow and humility – the dues of that *pietas* the practice of which Roman authors have taught us.[3]

tua me, genitor, tua tristis imago
saepius occurrens haec limina tendere adegit.[4]

So Virgil's Aeneas addressed his father. Virgil gave us, in Aeneas, the pattern of filial piety; and Dante, the master of modern European poets, has left for other poets the pattern of piety towards Virgil:

Virgilio dolcissimo patre,
Virgilio a cui per mia salute die' mi.[5]

Virgil must remain, for us, the exemplar of the literary artist. But I do not think now, so much of his unique and permanent place for poets and readers of poetry, as of the difference Virgil's poetry has made to innumerable Europeans who have never read it: the difference it has made, in two thousand years, to the European sensibility, to the way we actually feel about nature, about man, about this life and even about the next. The question of our relative debts to Athens and to Rome has often been debated, and always vainly; for they are not debts in quite the same kind. But we must remember that it was through Rome, that our connection with ancient Greece, as with ancient Israel, was established; through Rome, Greece and Israel influenced us[6†] during the centuries when Europe was being formed; and to Rome we owe the fact that we are Europeans. *[E]t rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.*[7]

NOTES

1. As Archbishop of Westminster since Dec 1943, Bernard Griffin (1899-1956) was the preeminent Roman Catholic prelate in England. Harold Stevens (1883-1961), known as *Colonnello Buonasera* [Colonel Good Evening], anchored the BBC's *Radio Londra* [Radio London], a propaganda program broadcast to Italy. From 1931 to 1935 he served as military attaché at the British embassy in Rome. The jurist Wilfred Greene, 1st Baron Greene (1883-1952), was Master of the Rolls (1937-1949). Gerald Wellesley, 7th Duke of Wellington (1885-1972), was a professional diplomat and amateur architect and historian; he was also the estranged husband of Dorothy Wellesley, the poet and close friend of Yeats.

2†. Prior to correction in draft TS: "If the claims of this spiritual kinship, violated in fratricide,"

3. *Pietas* (OED): "A sense of respect, reverence, or duty towards an ancestor, country, etc." This is the virtue that Virgil ascribes formulaically to the "pious Aeneas."

4. *Aeneid* VI.695-96; *trans*: "Thy shade, father, thy sad shade, meeting me so oft, drove me to seek these portals." Trans: H. Rushton Fairclough, *Virgil*, vol I, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1916), 554-55. In his letter to John Hayward of 1 June, informing him of the broadcast, TSE mentions having spent a part of his weekend "reading *Aeneid* VI (with Loeb)." The quoted lines are Aeneas's words to Anchises upon their encounter in the underworld.

5. *Purgatorio* XXX.50-51; *trans*: "Virgil sweetest father, Virgil to whom for my weal I gave me up" (*DC2* 383). So Dante, in the Earthly Paradise, mourns his sudden loss of Virgil as his guide.

6†. Prior to correction in draft TS: "that our connection with Greece was established; through Rome, Greece influenced us"

7. Virgil, *Georgics* II.534; *trans*: "[T]hus Rome became of all things the fairest" (Fairclough, 153).

TEXTUAL NOTE

The broadcast script for the two-part program is in the BBC library, Caversham; a photocopy of the 19 June rebroadcast script is in the Beinecke Library, Yale University. TSE's original two-page typescript is in the Hayward Bequest at King's (P15); carbon copies of two typescript drafts, which he sent to Henry Ware and Theresa Eliot in Dec 1944, are in the Houghton Library (MS 1691 [35]).

To the Editor of *Svenska Dagbladet*

TSE sent this letter in response to a request from the Swedish journalist Sven Aurén (1906-85), then a London-based correspondent of *Svenska Dagbladet* [*Swedish Daily*] (Stockholm). On 28 May 1944, Aurén wrote TSE that he had been "putting to a number of prominent British men and women the following question: What will be your reactions on Armistice Day?"

> Many answered that they intended to celebrate as never before in their lives. Some expressed their intentions to make the day one for reflection concerning the past and the future. Others said that they would spend the day in prayer and explained what they would pray for.
>
> The *Svenska Dagbladet* would feel very honoured if you would care to answer the same question, thus increasing the value of this remarkable symposium.

It is unclear why TSE's response, dated 5 June 1944, was not printed.

Dear Mr. Aurén, – I doubt whether I can provide any singular and profound thoughts to supply your request of the 26th [sic] May. But you ask for "reactions," in the plural; and that suggests a difference which I anticipate in my response to the future *Waffenstillstand*, from that of 1918.[1] On the former occasion – even allowing for the fact that those who remember it were a great deal younger than we are now – the reaction was quite simple. Indeed, at the comparable stage of that war, the question asked by *Svenska Dagbladet* would have appeared fatuous. On the next occasion, I should expect that a number of thoughts would present themselves: it is impossible to predict which would be foremost or more persistent.

It is, for instance, a token of the difference, that minds should dwell upon the prospect of the abolition of the "black-out": not because it is important, or because our minds are concerned with trivialities, but because it seems the one advantage upon which we can most confidently rely. I think that the second thought must be relief at the termination of destruction, both of human lives and of material, of works of art and of human habitations; with the reflection that, however terrible the destitution, disease and misery of Europe, it need not now get worse, and now at last something can be done about it. The third thought will be of anxiety about the restoration of order and freedom. My thoughts seem to begin with the concrete and material, and only proceed slowly towards the more spiritual. I should wish to spend the day – if there was one particular day – partly alone and partly in communal worship: and pray, certainly, for the renewal of Christendom in Europe.

Yours faithfully,
[T. S. ELIOT]

NOTE

1. *Waffenstillstand*: German, "ceasefire." The armistice ending World War I was signed early on 11 Nov 1918 and went into effect at 11 a.m. that day.

What France Means to You[1]

La France libre, 8 (15 June 1944) 94-95

En examinant, dans un récent numéro de *La France Libre*, les réponses qu'on a faites à cette question, je m'aperçois qu'il est possible de l'interpréter, et d'y répondre, de façons fort diverses. Dans le court espace dont je dispose, je m'efforcerai de ne pas répéter ce qu'on a déjà dit, et de ne pas récapituler ce que la France représente, non seulement à mes yeux, mais à ceux de beaucoup de mes compatriotes. Cette élimination me conduit à essayer de définir ce que la France a été pour moi dans le passé (mais sans parler des paysages, ni de la cuisine, ni des amitiés personnelles), et d'y chercher une indication de ce qu'elle est aujourd'hui et sera demain pour moi.

Il est certain, et inévitable, que la France représente pour moi quelque chose d'un peu différent de ce qu'elle représente pour la plupart de ceux qui lui ont ici apporté leur hommage. Car la première fois que j'ai posé le pied en Europe, c'était sur le quai de Cherbourg : et j'avais séjourné à Paris avant mon premier voyage en Angleterre.[2] (J'ai conservé depuis lors une affection particulière pour le paysage normand, que j'ai vu d'abord au clair de lune . . . mais j'ai promis, il y a un instant, de ne pas parler de paysages.) Je crois que c'était une bonne fortune exceptionnelle, pour un adolescent, de découvrir Paris en l'an 1910. *La Nouvelle Revue Française* était encore vraiment nouvelle : et les *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* paraissaient, sous leur austère couverture de papier gris.[3] Je suppose qu'il y a encore des bergsoniens : mais pour avoir vraiment connu la ferveur bergsonienne, il faut être allé, régulièrement, chaque semaine, dans cette salle pleine à craquer où il faisait ses cours, au Collège de France. (Il fallait arriver cinq quarts d'heure à l'avance, ce qui procurait un auditoire étonnamment fourni à M. Leroy-Beaulieu et à ses statistiques.)[4] On avait toujours une chance d'apercevoir Anatole France, le long des quais : et on achetait le dernier livre de Gide ou de Claudel le jour même de sa parution. Tantôt Paris était tout le passé ; tantôt tout l'avenir : et ces deux aspects se combinaient en un présent parfait.

Si c'est cela (notamment) que la France représente pour moi, peut-être est-ce grâce à un heureux accident du hasard. Mais ce n'est pas un accident qui m'avait conduit à Paris. Depuis plusieurs années, la France représentait surtout, à mes yeux, la *poésie*. Si je n'avais découvert Baudelaire, et toute la poésie qui découle de Baudelaire – en particulier celle de Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud et Mallarmé – je ne crois pas que j'aurais jamais pu écrire. Cette découverte m'assura d'un fait dont la poésie anglaise de la même époque ne m'avait donné aucun signe certain ; à savoir qu'il existait un langage moderne, et que la poésie anglaise conservait des possibilités inexplorées. Peut-être suis-je tenté d'exagérer l'importance que cette découverte eut pour la poésie anglaise : mais pour ce qui est de l'importance qu'elle eut dans ma vie, je crains seulement que mon témoignage ne reste en-dessous de la vérité.

J'ai toujours soutenu que la littérature a besoin, non seulement des grandes vagues d'influence étrangère qui déferlent sur elle de temps à autre, mais aussi d'une constante autocritique, à la lumière des œuvres littéraires que d'autres pays produisent à la même époque. La parenté entre les littératures anglaise et française est très spéciale : les influences venues d'ailleurs sont surtout influences individuelles d'auteurs particuliers, tandis que, dans le cas de l'Angleterre ou de la France, il s'agit de l'influence *globale* de toute une littérature, même si elle s'exerce par l'*intermédiaire* d'auteurs particuliers. Je suis sûr, tout au moins, que c'est vrai de l'influence que la littérature française a exercée sur l'Angleterre (et c'est pourquoi j'hésiterais à souscrire à l'opinion de M. Mortimer : pour moi, il ne saurait être question de *choisir* entre Montaigne, Pascal et Voltaire).[5] C'est pourquoi ce bref exposé (simple choix, entre toutes les choses qu'il faudrait, me semble-t-il, dire à ce sujet) de ce que la France a été pour moi dans le passé, devrait suffire à indiquer ce qu'elle représente, à mes yeux, pour l'avenir. Parce que je me soucie de l'avenir de l'Angleterre, je suis forcé de me soucier également de l'avenir de la France ; parce que je suis forcé de croire à l'avenir de l'Angleterre, je ne puis envisager qu'avec confiance l'avenir de la France.

T. S. ELIOT

TRANSLATION[6]

Examining the responses given to this question in a recent issue of *La France libre*, I realize that it is possible to interpret it, and to respond to it, in very different ways. In the short space I have available, I will endeavor not to repeat what has already been said, and not to summarize what France means not only to me but also to many of my compatriots. This limitation leads me to attempt a definition of what France has meant to me in the past (but without talking about the landscapes, the food or the personal friendships) and to look for an indication of what it means for me today and what it will mean tomorrow.

It is certain, and inevitable, that France represents for me something rather different from what it represents for most of those who have paid their homage here. Because the first time I set foot in Europe was on the quay of Cherbourg, and I had spent time in Paris before my first trip to England.[2] (I have since retained a particular affection for the Norman landscape, which I first saw in the moonlight . . . but I promised a moment ago not to talk about landscapes.) I think it was exceptionally good luck for an adolescent to discover Paris in 1910. *La Nouvelle Revue française* was still genuinely new, and the *Cahiers de la quinzaine* were being published in their austere grey covers. [3] I suppose there are still some Bergsonians, but in order to have really known the Bergsonian mania, one should have gone regularly, every week, to that crammed lecture hall where he gave his lectures at the Collège de France. (One had to arrive an hour and a quarter early, which provided M. Leroy-Beaulieu and his statistics with an astonishingly large audience.)[4] One always had the chance to glimpse Anatole France along the dockside, and one bought Gide's or Claudel's latest book on the day of publication. Sometimes Paris was all past; sometimes it was all future: and these two aspects combined to form a perfect present.

If that is what France means to me in particular, maybe it is thanks to a lucky coincidence. But it was not a coincidence that had led me to Paris. For many years France had represented above all, in my eyes, *poetry*. If I had not discovered Baudelaire, and all the poetry that stems from Baudelaire – in particular that of Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé – I do not believe that I would have ever been able to write. This discovery assured me of a fact of which the English poetry of the same period had not given me any clear sign, namely that there was a modern idiom, and that English poetry still had some unexplored possibilities. Perhaps I am tempted to exaggerate the importance which that discovery had for English poetry; but as for its importance in my own life, I only fear that my testimony does not do it justice.

I have always maintained that literature needs not only major waves of foreign influence to batter it from time to time, but also a constant self-criticism in light of the literary works produced by other countries in the same period. The relationship between English and French literature is very special indeed: the influences from elsewhere are mainly individual influences from particular authors, while in the case of England or France it is the *collective* influence of an entire literature, even though it is exercised *through* particular authors. I am certain, at the very least, that this is true of the influence which French literature has exercised on England (and that is why I would hesitate to subscribe to Mr. Mortimer's opinion: for me it would not be a question of *choosing* between Montaigne, Pascal and Voltaire).[5] Hence this brief account (a simple choice among all the things that, it seems to me, need to be said on this topic) of what France has meant to me in the past should be enough to indicate what it represents for me in the future. As I am concerned about the future of England, I am compelled to be equally concerned about the future of France; as I am compelled to believe in the future of England, I can only contemplate with confidence the future of France.

NOTES

1. *La France libre*, a London-based Free French monthly, published four features under this title from Apr through July 1944, each consisting of four or five short personal essays (printed in French) by British notables. The series was edited by Raymond Mortimer. TSE's contribution, completed by 12 May, appeared – a few days after the Allied landings in Normandy – in the third installment, together with contributions from Harold Laski, Kathleen Raine, and Violet Trefusis. Other contributors to the series included Sir Kenneth Clark, Christopher Dawson, David Garnett, C. S. Lewis, Gilbert Murray, Harold Nicolson, Michael Roberts, and Vita Sackville-West.

2. The port city of Cherbourg, in northern France, is a terminus for transatlantic ships as well as cross-Channel ferries. TSE arrived in France from the United States in Oct 1910 and stayed in Paris till the following Apr, when he left for his first visit to London.

3. *NRF*, the literary monthly founded in 1909 by André Gide and others. TSE wrote four essays for the journal between 1922 and 1927. (During the Nazi occupation, it became a collaborationist organ.) *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, the literary fortnightly edited and largely authored by Charles Péguy, was published from 1900 to 1914, when Péguy died.

4. Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu (1843-1916), professor of political economy at the Collège de France. The topic of his Friday lectures in 1910-11 was "De la population; tendances des peuples primitifs; tendances des peuples civilisés" [On population: trends in primitive peoples; trends in civilized peoples]. TSE attended Bergson's weekly lectures in early 1911 (1.xxxii-xxxiii).

5. In his introductory comments to the series, published in the issue of 15 Apr, Mortimer wrote: "Chacun de nous est tenté de voir en la France le symbole de ses idées et de ses sentiments favoris. Pour tel d'entre nous, la France est le pays de Montaigne et de Voltaire, pour tel autre, celui de Pascal et de Rimbaud. Mais en fait, chacun de ces quatre esprits est suprêmement français. Si nous voulons que notre amour de la France se fonde sur une véritable compréhension, il nous faut voir et respecter sa diversité spirituelle" (401). *Trans*: Each of us is tempted to see in France the symbol of his own ideas and his own favorite sentiments. For some among us, France is the country of Montaigne and Voltaire; for others, that of Pascal and Rimbaud. In fact, though, each of these four spirits is supremely French. If we wish our love of France to be founded on a true understanding, we must see and respect her spiritual diversity.

6. Translation by Iman Javadi.

Tribute to Anton Chekhov

Sean O'Casey wrote to TSE on 3 June 1944 on behalf of the Foreign Commission, Union of Soviet Writers, inviting him to contribute an appreciation of Chekhov, on the fortieth anniversary of his death, for publication in the Soviet press on 15 July. "I do hope you may find the time to do one," wrote O'Casey. "It is pleasant that one land at least is beginning to honour its better men." "I imagine," TSE replied to O'Casey on 7 June, "that a short appreciation promptly delivered would be preferred to a long one which would take more time. The trouble is that one has to do so much of this sort of thing nowadays." Instructed to send his text to V. Konoff, Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in London, and to place it in an enclosed envelope marked "P.O. Box 805, Moscow" for forwarding, TSE wrote to Konoff on 17 June: "what I have written, which I enclose, will itself explain why it is so brief and so inadequate. I do not know whether it is not too slight to be suitable; but if it is acceptable, I shall be proud of the honour." TSE's tribute, which he dated 17 June 1944, was never published in English, and no record of publication in a Russian newspaper has been traced.

The Soviet Union are, I understand, about to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the death of Anton Chekhov.[1] I do not know why the fortieth anniversary is of particular importance: but I feel strongly that no European writer who owes anything to Chekhov should miss any opportunity of paying his tribute to the memory of that great man. Like many other people in England, I am at the moment, owing to various enemy actions, prevented from access to many books. To write the appreciation of Chekhov which I should like to send, I should need to re-read all his stories and plays, and for that I have neither opportunity nor time. But I think that the most substantial tribute that an author, especially a foreign author, can pay to a writer of genius, is the tribute of recognition of the debt which his own writing owes, to the work of the man whose greatness is to be celebrated. For this reason I say nothing of the stories, for I am not a story writer: I have attempted to write plays, and I hope to persevere in the attempt. So it is the dramatist Chekhov whom I salute.

I am not a natural playwright, and my interest in drama is primarily an interest in *verse* drama. In the last hundred years a great many verse dramas have been written, but they are of little use to the dramatist; there have been a great many prose plays written, but they are of little use to the poet. The only two dramatists, within that period, who seem to me to be of any possible value for the writer of poetry-plays to-day, are Ibsen and Chekhov

– and Ibsen more in his prose plays than in *Per Gynt*.[2] They are prose dramatists, but their plays (indeed I think this is true of all great plays) are essentially and not accidentally, poetic. And of these two great dramatists the one who has made much the deeper impression on my own sensibility, is Chekhov. He has, it seems to me, the more modern sensibility. I think that what I mean is this: comedy and tragedy are the permanent poles of drama. But to the English mind, at least, that drama has always appealed in which both comedy and tragedy were present in the same play. In the great period of our Elizabethan drama, the necessary comic element in tragedy was usually provided in separate scenes; though there is a more subtle fusion in some scenes of Shakespeare. The modern mind, I think, requires the fusion of comedy and tragedy to be more complete: so that the same scene, even the same whole play, may be comedy from one point of view, and tragedy from another; and in such a way that the comic perception heightens the tragedy, and the tragic element intensifies the comedy. When the effect is achieved by a great dramatic writer, the result is poetry: giving you not merely idea, but feeling, and therefore realistic and concrete, in a way in which only poetry can be. So, while the characters of Chekhov talk in prose, the effect of the play is that of great poetry. That, at any rate, is an attempt to indicate the stimulus, the excitement and the encouragement which Chekhov has given to one English writer.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Chekhov died 15 July 1904.

2. I.e., *Peer Gynt* (1867), Ibsen's last and best-known play in verse. The legend of Per Gynt, a Norwegian folk hero, is one of its sources.

James Joyce

To the Editor of *The Listener*

The Listener, 31 (22 June 1944), 696

On what Mr. O'Connor says of Irish writers in general in his talk entitled "Egotism in Irish Literature," in your issue of June 1, I would not attempt to pronounce: Mr. O'Connor is an Irish writer himself, and everything Irish writers say about themselves is interesting.[1] But he devotes most of his attention to James Joyce: in so far as this is literary criticism, I disagree with what he says; and in so far as it is a character-sketch, any friend of Joyce must resent it. Even the physical description gives a very different picture from that of the Joyce I remember. I remember him a normally pale, though with a skin which sunburnt easily. As for the "half-dead, inward-looking eyes," the answer is that they *were* half-dead – Mr. O'Connor does not make a single reference to Joyce's partial blindness, allowance for which is necessary for understanding both the books and the man. As for the rocky chin, I think that I have seen a good many of those chins on Irish faces. After a description of Joyce's character in which no good qualities are admitted, Mr. O'Connor asks: "I wonder does one have to be an Irishman to understand and respect a man like that?" I am still wondering what this question means.

T. S. ELIOT

London, W.C.1

NOTE

[1] Frank O'Connor (1903-66), Irish author in several genres. TSE published his story "Uprooted" in the *Criterion* in 1937. In "Egotism in Irish Literature," *The Listener*, 31 (1 June 1944), 608-09, O'Connor describes Joyce as "a Dubliner with a brick-red face shaped like the front of a battleship, with the rockiest chin I have ever seen on a man, and half-dead, inward-looking eyes" (608). He portrays Joyce as a "complete egotist" who "live[d] in an entirely self-centred way" (608-09).

The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe[1]

Norseman, 2 (Jul-Aug 1944) 243-48

I wish first to define the sense in which I shall use the term "man of letters." I shall mean the writer for whom his writing is primarily an *art*, who is as much concerned with style as with content; the understanding of whose writings, therefore, depends as much upon appreciation of style as upon comprehension of content. This is primarily the poet (including the dramatic poet), and the writer of prose fiction. To give emphasis to these two kinds of writer is not to deny the title "man of letters" to writers in many other fields: it is simply a way of isolating the problem of responsibility of the man of letters *qua* man of letters; and if what I have to say is true for the poet and the novelist, it will also be true for other writers in so far as they are "artists."

The first responsibility of the man of letters is, of course, his responsibility towards his art, the same, which neither time nor circumstance can abate or modify, that other artists have: that is, he must do his best with the medium in which he works. He differs from other artists, in that his medium is his language: we do not all paint pictures, and we are not all musicians, but we all talk. This fact gives the man of letters a special responsibility towards everybody who speaks the same language, a responsibility which workers in other arts do not share: I have touched upon this in a previous number of *The Norseman* and I do not propose to enlarge upon it now.[2] But, in general, special responsibilities which fall upon the man of letters at any time must take second place to his permanent responsibility as a literary artist. However, the man of letters is not, as a rule, exclusively engaged upon the production of works of art. He has other interests, like anybody else; interests which will, in all probability, exercise some influence upon the content and meaning of the works of art which he does produce. He has the same responsibility, and should have the same concern with the fate of his country, and with political and social affairs within it, as any other citizen; and in matters of controversy, there is no more reason why two men of letters should hold identical opinions, and support the same party and programme, than why any other two citizens should. Yet there are matters of public concern, in which the man of letters should express his opinion, and exert his influence, not merely as a citizen but as a man of letters: and upon such matters I think that it is desirable that men of letters should agree. In proceeding to suggest some of these, I have no expectation that all men of letters will agree with me: but if I confined myself to statements to which all men of letters, as men of letters, could give immediate assent, I should only be uttering platitudes.

The man of letters as such, is not concerned with the political or economic map of Europe; but he should be very much concerned with its cultural map. This problem, involving the relations of different cultures and languages in Europe, must have presented itself first, to the man of letters, as a domestic problem: in this context, foreign affairs are merely an extension of domestic affairs. Nearly every country, that has been long settled, is a composite of different local cultures; and even when it is completely homogeneous in race, it will, between east and west, or more often between north and south, exhibit differences of speech, of customs, and of ways of thinking and feeling. A small country, of course, is usually assumed by foreigners to be much more unified than it really is: and although the educated foreigner is aware that Britain contains within its small area several races and several languages, he may underestimate the importance of both the friction, and the often happy combination toward a common end, of the different types. It is a commonplace that industrialism (of which totalitarianism is a political expression) tends to obliterate these differences, to uproot men from their ancestral habitat, to mingle them in large manufacturing and business centres, or to send them hither and thither as the needs of manufacture and distribution may dictate. In its political aspect, industrialism tends to centralise the direction of affairs in one large metropolis, and to diminish that interest in, and control over, local affairs by which men gain political experience and sense of responsibility. Against this tendency, "regionalism" – as in the demand, from time to time, for greater local autonomy in Scotland or in Wales – is a protest.

It has often been the weakness of "regionalist" movements, to assume that a cultural malady can be cured by political means; to ascribe, to individuals belonging to the dominant culture, malignant intentions of which they may be innocent; and, by not probing deep enough into the causes, to prescribe a superficial remedy. By the materialist, these regional stirrings are often regarded with derision. The man of letters, who should be peculiarly qualified to respect and to criticise them, should be able to take a longer view than either the politician or the local patriot. He should know that neither in a complete and universal uniformity, nor in an isolated self-sufficiency, can culture flourish; that a local and a general culture are so far from being in conflict, that they are truly necessary to each other. To the engineering mind, the idea of a universal uniformity on the one hand or the idea of complete autarchy on the other, is more easily apprehensible. The union of local cultures in a general culture is more difficult to conceive, and more difficult to realise. But the man of letters should know that uniformity means the obliteration of culture, and that self-sufficiency means its death by starvation.

The man of letters should see also, that within any cultural unit, a proper balance of rural and urban life is essential. Without great cities – great, not necessarily in the modern material sense, but great by being the meeting-place of a society of superior mind and more polished manners – the culture of a nation will never rise above a rustic level; without the life of the soil from which to draw its strength, the urban culture must lose its source of strength and rejuvenescence. *Fortunatus et ille qui deos novit agrestes*.[3]

What we learn from a study of conditions within our own countries, we can apply to the cultural economy of Europe. The primary aim of politics, at the end of a great war, must be, of course, the establishment of a peace, and of a peace which will endure. But at different times, different notions of what conditions are necessary for peace may prevail. At the end of the last war, the idea of peace was associated with the idea of independence and freedom: it was thought that if each nation managed all its own affairs at home, and transacted its foreign political affairs through a League of Nations, peace would be perpetually assured. It was an idea which disregarded the *unity* of European culture. At the end of this war, the idea of peace is more likely to be associated with the idea of *efficiency* – that is, with whatever can be *planned*. This would be to disregard the *diversity* of European culture. It is not that "culture" is in danger of being ignored: on the contrary, I think that culture might be safer if it were less talked about. But in this talk of "culture," the notion of a European culture – a culture with several sub-divisions, other than national boundaries, within it, and with various crossing threads of relationship between countries, but still a recognisable universal European culture – is not very prominent: and there is a danger that the importance of the various cultures may be assumed to be in proportion to the size, population, wealth and power of the nations.

I have mentioned the problem of regional diversities of race and culture within one nation (as in Great Britain) not merely as a helpful analogy to the diversity of Europe, but because I think the two problems are essentially one and the same. I do not think that a unity between the main regional cultures of Europe is possible, unless each of the units is itself comprehensive of considerable diversity. A completely unified national culture, such as has been the ambition of German ideologues and politicians, for the last hundred years and more, to bring about in Germany, tends to become, as is easily seen from a purely political point of view, a menace to its neighbours. What is not so immediately obvious is, that from a cultural point of view, a nation so completely unified is a menace to itself. We can all see that in a nation the citizens of which have been trained to regard each other as brothers, we shall find the brotherliness intensified by, and in turn intensifying, a common hatred of foreigners. We can even say that a nation in which a good deal of internal bickering and quarrelling does not go on, cannot be a desirable member of the European community of nations. But I think that a nation which is completely unified culturally, will cease to produce any culture: so that there must be a certain amount of internal *cultural* bickering and jealousy, if it is to achieve anything in the way of art, thought and spiritual activity – and thereby make its contribution to the culture of Europe.

The achievement of a creative balance of local and racial forces, within a single nation or between the communities of Europe, seems to me, however, nothing like so easy as some theorists like Professor E. H. Carr, whose attention is concentrated upon purely political problems, seem to believe.[4] "There is every reason to suppose," says Professor Carr in his *Conditions of Peace*, "that considerable numbers of Welshmen, Catalans and Uzbeks have quite sufficiently solved the problem of regarding themselves as good Welshmen, Catalans and Uzbeks for some purposes and good British, Spanish and Soviet citizens for others" [63]. I do not know how considerable numbers of Catalans and Uzbeks feel about it; but so far as the Welsh are concerned, Professor Carr seems to me to have answered a question which no Welshman would ask. The majority of Welsh, I have no doubt, would regard themselves as both "good Welsh" and "good Britons" (apart from the fact that the Welsh have a better ancestral claim than most of us in this island, to regard themselves as *Britons* – but Mr. Carr has been a professor at Aberystwyth, so he ought to know[5]): the question for them is, whether Welsh culture can maintain and develop itself, against the pressure towards indifferentiated uniformity which is exerted from London? The same question is asked in Scotland; the same question should be asked in every county of England which has not already been absorbed by London or by some great provincial industrial town. And if all the parts of Britain lose their local cultures, they will have nothing to contribute to the formation of British culture, and, consequently, Britain will have nothing to contribute to European culture.

I have suggested that the cultural health of Europe, including the cultural health of its component parts, is incompatible with extreme forms of both nationalism and internationalism. But the cause of that disease, which destroys the very soil in which culture has its roots, is not so much extreme ideas, and the fanaticism which they stimulate, as the relentless pressure of modern industrialism, setting the problems which the extreme ideas attempt to solve. Not least of the effects of industrialism is that we become mechanised in mind, and consequently attempt to provide solutions in terms of *engineering*, for problems which are essentially problems of *life*.

I may seem, in the foregoing pages, to have been departing further and further from the subject of this paper: the responsibility of the man of letters. Political problems will continue to be dealt with by politicians, and economic problems by economists; and there must continually be compromises between the political and the economic points of view. And just as these are not two wholly separate areas of activity, which can be satisfactorily dealt with by two mutually independent groups of specialists, so the "cultural" area cannot be isolated from either of these. It would be very convenient if it were so, and if the men of letters, and the other people whose special concern may be said to be matters of "culture," could pursue their policies indifferent to what happens in the political and economic realms. The assumption that such a clear separation of activities can be made, seems to underlie such a statement of Professor Carr's as the following:

> The existence of a more or less homogeneous racial or linguistic group bound together by a common tradition and the cultivation of a common culture must cease to provide a *prima facie* case for the setting up or the maintenance of an independent political unit. (62)

One cannot say that this statement, as it stands, is unacceptable. But it needs qualification; for, otherwise, one might infer from it that the "culture" of a "more or less homogeneous racial or linguistic group bound together by a common tradition and the cultivation of a common culture" can flourish unimpaired, whatever its degree of political subordination. In other words, I raise the question whether the culture of such a group can remain independent, without some degree of political independence: though on the other hand, I assert that *complete* cultural autarchy is not compatible with the existence of a common European culture. The world's real problems are in practice a complex, usually a confusion, of political, economic, cultural and religious considerations; in one or another situation, one or more of these will be sacrificed to the one which is, in that situation, the most compulsive; but every one of them involves the rest.

The responsibility of the man of letters at the present time, according to this point of view, is neither to ignore politics and economics, nor, certainly, to desert literature in order to precipitate himself into controversy on matters which he does not understand. But he should be vigilantly watching the conduct of politicians and economists, for the purpose of criticising and warning, when the decisions and actions of politicians and economists are likely to have cultural consequences. Of these consequences the man of letters is one of the best qualified to judge. Of the possible cultural consequences of their activities, politicians and economists are usually oblivious; the man of letters is better qualified to foresee them, and to perceive their seriousness.[6*]

I should not like to give the impression that I assume there to be a definite frontier, between the matters of direct and those of indirect concern to the man of letters. In matters of Education, for instance, he is less directly concerned with the problems of organisation and administration of popular instruction, than he is with the *content* of education. He should certainly be aware, of what many persons seem to be ignorant, that it is possible to have a high state of culture with very little education, and a great deal of education without any consequent improvement of culture: from some points of view he will not take education quite so seriously as other people seem to do. But he is very much concerned with the maintenance of *quality*, and with the constant reminder of what is easily overlooked: that, if we had to choose, it would be better that a few people should be educated well, than that everyone should be educated moderately well. He should also be particularly concerned, with the maintenance of those elements in education which the several European nations have in the past had in common. We are not only in danger of, we are actually suffering from, excessive nationalism in education. The common higher elements of European secular education are, I presume, the cultivation of Latin and Greek language and literature, and the cultivation of pure science. At a time when science is chiefly advertised for the sake of the practical benefits, from invention and discovery, which the application of science may confer, the reminder is perhaps not inappropriate, that applied science is always liable to be contaminated by political and economic motives, and that inventions and discoveries appeal to people as often for their usefulness in getting the better of other people, in peace and in war, as for their common benefits to mankind. And also, that it is not the use of the same machines and the enjoyment of the same comforts and therapeutic aids, that can establish and develop a common mind, a common culture. I speak of science, however, with some hesitation: but I am wholly convinced that for the preservation of any European culture, as well as for the health of its national components, a perpetual cultivation of the sources of that culture, in Greece and Rome, and a continual refreshment from them, are necessary. I should say Israel also, but that I wish to confine myself, so far as that is possible, to the cultural, rather than the religious aspect.

There are other matters over which the man of letters should exercise constant surveillance: matters which may, from time to time, and here and there, present themselves with immediate urgency. Such are the questions which arise in particular contexts, when the freedom of the man of letters is menaced. I have in mind, not merely questions of censorship, whether political, religious or moral: my experience tells me that these issues must be faced as they arise. I have in mind also the dangers which may come from official encouragement and patronage of the arts; the dangers to which men of letters would be exposed, if they became, in their professional capacity, servants of the state.[7]* Modern governments are very much aware of the new invention "cultural propaganda," even when the governors are not remarkably sensitive to culture: and, however necessary cultural propaganda may be under modern conditions, we must be alert to the fact that all propaganda can be perverted.

As I said earlier, I do not expect that all men of letters, in every country of Europe, will concur with my *views*: but I venture to hope that some of them will agree, that there is a range of public problems in which we all have, irrespective of nationality, language or political bias, a common interest, and about which we might hope to have a common mind; and I hope that some will agree that I have stated some of these problems. Such agreement would give more content to the phrase "the republic of letters." The "republic" or (to use a stronger term) the "fraternity" of letters does not, fortunately, demand that all men of letters should love one another – there always have been, and always will be, jealousy and intrigue amongst authors: but it does imply that we have a mutual bond, and a mutual obligation to a common ideal; and that on some questions we should speak for Europe even when we speak only to our fellow-countrymen.[8]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The editor of the *Norseman*, Professor Andreas Hofgaard Winsnes of the University of Oslo, appealed to TSE on 9 May 1944 for a contribution to "an issue which will deal with the restoration of Europe from a cultural point of view." TSE agreed to write an article under the title Winsnes requested, although, as he told Cyril Connolly on 11 Nov, it struck him as "pompous."

2. That is, in "The Social Function of Poetry" (6.436).

3. Virgil, *Georgics* 2.493; *read*: "*ille, deos qui*." *Trans*: "Fortunate, too, is one who knows the gods of the countryside."

4. In *Conditions of Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1942), Carr advocated a radical rethinking of economics and politics based on a modern understanding of human nature. Multilateral socioeconomic planning and a centralized "international order" were crucial to his vision of postwar Europe.

5. Carr was the Woodrow Wilson Professor of International Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth (1936-47).

6*. TSE's note: "A case in point is the Education Bill in this country, which has passed the House of Commons and which is, as I write, about to be debated by the House of Lords. No one so far, appears to have devoted any attention to the probable effects of such a measure upon English culture: even the ecclesiastics have not arrived at any definite view of the probable effects upon English religion." On the 1944 Butler Education Act, see note 2 to TSE's letter of 28 Jan 1944 to the *Church Times* (6.497) and the introduction to this volume (6.xxxi-xxxii).

7*. TSE's note: "Formerly, English men of letters often found their livelihood in the Civil Service. But this kind of dependence upon the State enabled them to be all the freer to follow their own aims and observe their own consciences as writers. This was a very different thing from serving the State *as men of letters*. In the future it seems likely that Civil Servants will be far too busy to be authors in their spare time, and that the Civil Service will not enlist men of this type."

8. When TSE sent his essay to Winsnes on 11 June, he wrote: "I apologise for its untidiness, as well as for the sketchiness and fragmentariness of the presentation: but otherwise I could not have delivered it in time; and to deal with the subject really adequately seemed to demand a great deal more space." Despite these misgivings, he offered the essay to both Connolly, who reprinted it in *Horizon*, and Allen Tate, who reprinted it in the *Sewanee Review*.

To the Reader

Preface to *Inoubliable France — France Remembered*, by Alice Jahier; trans. J. G. Weightman[1]

London: Sylvan Press; Nicholson & Watson, 1944. Pp 93; Preface, 5.

Those who open this book, to study the photographs, of scenes so familiar and so strange, and to read the evocative text, are likely to be drawn to it first by its power of awakening memories from their own past lives. Whether these are memories of six or seven years ago, or out of a more remote past, it makes no difference. To most English lovers of France, the most recent visit now appears in as distant a perspective as the first recollections. To some, this book will bring memories of holidays, or of visits to French friends; to some, memories of studies pursued with the ardour and curiosity of youth; to some, memories of still more intense experience. The views of familiar places will recall the moments of our lives which were passed there; those of places unvisited, will be assimilated to other scenes of French landscape which we have known.

The picture of a place, however, as it evokes personal memories, may identify that place too closely with a life that is buried, or a chapter that is closed. I would remind you therefore that these photographs do not come from your album of souvenirs, they record the expression of their subjects, the demeanour of the monuments and streets and countryside, under actual conditions. Yet with the passing of the horde they have little concern. They are of the present, and also of the permanent France; they will remind you that the France you loved did not die when you parted from her; and they will, I hope, help to span the gulf between the France you knew and the France you look forward to knowing, between the thoughts and sentiments and experience of the past and those of the future. So, when we receive a recent photograph, of a friend who has passed through agonies since our last meeting, we may say first "how little changed!" and presently, "Yes, changed, certainly, and I am glad to think that I have changed too; for unless we both change, and change in harmony, how can our affection survive?"[2]

T. S. ELIOT

AU LECTEUR

Ceux qui ouvriront ce livre pour regarder ces photographies aux sujets à la fois si familiers et si étranges, et pour en lire le texte évocateur, seront sans doute attirés tout d'abord par le pouvoir qu'il a d'éveiller en chacun des souvenirs personnels. Peu importe que ces souvenirs remontent seulement à six ou sept ans, ou beaucoup plus loin. Pour l'Anglais qui aime la France, son dernier voyage semble maintenant, en perspective, aussi lointain que ses plus vieux souvenirs. À certains, ce livre rappellera des vacances, ou des séjours chez des amis français ; à d'autres, il rappellera des études poursuivies avec l'ardeur et la curiosité de la jeunesse ; à d'autres, des épisodes de vie plus intense encore. L'image des lieux familiers nous remémorera les heures que nous y avons vécues ; celle des lieux que nous n'avons jamais visités viendra s'ajouter et se fondre au souvenir des paysages que nous avons connus.

Mais il arrive que l'image d'un lieu, en évoquant des souvenirs personnels, associe trop étroitement ce lieu à une vie qui est morte, à un chapitre qui est clos. C'est pourquoi je tiens à vous rappeler que ces photographies ne viennent pas de votre album de souvenirs ; elles montrent l'expression de leurs sujets, l'attitude des monuments, le comportement des rues et des campagnes. On n'y voit guère, pourtant, le passage des hordes. C'est que, si elles représentent la France d'aujourd'hui, elles représentent aussi la France de toujours. Elles vous rappelleront que la France que vous avez aimée n'est pas morte, quand les circonstances vous ont séparé d'elle. Elles vous aideront, j'espère, à franchir l'espace vide entre la France que vous avez connue et celle qu'il vous tarde de connaître – entre les pensées, les sentiments, les épisodes passés, et ceux de l'avenir. De même, recevant une photographie récente d'un ami qui a traversé, depuis notre dernière rencontre, de terribles épreuves, il se peut que notre première impression soit : « Comme il a peu changé ! » Mais bientôt nous nous disons : « Oui, il a changé, c'est indiscutable : et je suis heureux d'avoir changé aussi ; car si nous ne changeons tous les deux, et en harmonie l'un avec l'autre, qu'adviendrait-il de notre affection ? »[2]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *Inoubliable France* (literally "Unforgettable France"), a photo essay on pre-occupation France, comprises a series of forty-two photographs, with related French text and English translation printed on facing pages. TSE's preface – the book's English title page calls it an introduction – was solicited by the Russian woman of letters Moura Ignatievna Zakrevskaya,

Baroness Budberg (1891-1974), who was doing editorial work during the war for the monthly journal *La France libre* (London). TSE felt beleaguered by her frequent requests for his writing, but he agreed to contribute the present item despite a peculiar handicap: as he told John Hayward on 12 May 1944, he had completed his preface for a "book of French photographs which I have not seen – I hope they are not pornographic."

The photo essay was authored by Alice Jahier, a French-Jewish journalist who in 1940 had fled to London, where she worked for the Free French Department of Protocol and wrote for the newspaper *France*. Her text was translated by John George Weightman (1915-2004), an English scholar of French literature and culture.

2. When the publisher sent TSE a check for this preface, he returned it on 7 Aug 1944, explaining, "I do not feel it proper to accept a fee for a service of this kind. . . . I shall be obliged if you will add this sum to the profits which, as I understood from Baroness Budberg, were to be devoted to French relief of some kind."

To the Editor of *Blackfriars*

Blackfriars, 25 (Sept 1944) 360

Dear Sir, – At the close of an article called "The Tragedy of James Joyce" in your August issue, Mr. Anthony Birrell suggests that Messrs. Faber and Faber would do well to republish *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.[1]

May I point out that this book, originally published by the Egoist Press Ltd., has been for some years the property of Messrs. Jonathan Cape Ltd.? There is, or was, a cheap edition.[2]

Yours faithfully,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] "The Tragedy of James Joyce," *Blackfriars*, 25 (Aug 1944), 303-06, is actually a review of TSE's *Introducing James Joyce* (6.329). Birrell censures Joyce for "deliberately shut[ting] himself off from [the] cultural milieu with which he was in sympathetic contact" and for "surrendering," in *Finnegans Wake* and the later pages of *Ulysses*, "the undoubted gifts displayed" in his earlier work (304-05). He criticizes TSE's introduction as well: "[I]t is to be deplored that a critic of such standing as Mr. Eliot does not make his critical judgements with more sureness, firmness and precision. His introductory note leaves the unpleasant impression that Joyce is to be considered as another of Mr. Eliot's perverse addictions, and is to be taken together with Marie Lloyd, Nellie Wallace, Little Tich, Camembert and Kipling" (306).

In 1944, Thomas Anthony Clement Birrell (1924-2011) was a twenty-year-old soldier in the Royal Armoured Corps serving in the Netherlands, his studies at Cambridge on hiatus. He would go on after the war to become a literary scholar, mainly of seventeenth-century English writing and book history.

[2] Jonathan Cape reissued *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1930, 1934, 1936, and 1944. According to an advertisement marking Joyce's recent death in the *TLS* of 18 Jan 1941, the novel retailed for 3s 6d. In contrast, *Ulysses*, published by John Lane, was priced at 25s 6d.

The Meaning of Democracy[1]

To the Editor of *Christendom*

Christendom, 13 (Sept 1944) 216

Sir, – We are grateful to Mr. Mackinnon for "Some Reflections on Democracy" in your June issue – in spite of what seems to me a somewhat ungenerous innuendo against our neo-agrarians.[2] I find myself generally in agreement with him: it is only in his fifth paragraph that he strikes me as guilty of a lapse from the crystalline lucidity which he has recently taught us to expect from him.[3] To find Mr. Mackinnon a democrat of the school of Burke is gratifying: but he seems to withdraw into some different philosophy towards the end of his paragraph, and to regard "aristocracy" as somehow antithetical to "democracy."[4] To those of us who had supposed that aristocracy and democracy were complimentary, and in the long run even necessary to each other, this is surprising. It is very disconcerting to be told that an "aristocrat" (i.e., anyone who believes in the value of aristocracy) is not merely "Utopian," but a heretic. I hope that Mr. Mackinnon may be persuaded to throw more light upon this pronouncement.

Mr. Mackinnon has put us in his debt by suggesting a useful word: *planters*.[5] If we practised substituting *planters* for *planners*, our sociology might benefit without any additional burden upon the compositors. But I shall be glad to compose a eulogistic ode, addressed to the Editor, if he can succeed throughout four numbers in keeping the word *technique* out of his pages.[6]

Your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] The TS (carbon), 2 pp, is dated 16 June 1944.

[2] D. M. Mackinnon, "Some Reflections on Democracy," *Christendom*, 13 (June 1944), 175-77. A Scottish theologian and philosopher at Keble College, Oxford, Mackinnon (1913-94) was an Anglo-Catholic Labourite with socialist leanings. In "Some Reflections on Democracy" he argues, first, that Christian thinkers must resist the temptation "to ignore politics" in favor of foundational values; and, second, that Christian thinkers "must attempt a serious revaluation of democracy" and recommit to it on a more thoroughly considered basis.

Regarding agrarianism, Mackinnon comments: "We can retire to the fields, and there pen self-conscious little diaries, exalting the superiority of our way of life over that of the industrial worker, the mass-man of the dormitory suburb, and the rest, who eat tinned beans and queue for the 'flicks' – and, be it never forgotten by the high-minded, endured the Blitz. But still in the higgledy-piggledy of our human life, politics is there, and we have to make political decisions" (175).

3. On Mackinnon's "crystalline lucidity," TSE remarked to Geoffrey Curtis on 31 Dec 1940, "I find him so difficult a writer that I do not know how far I disagree with him because I do not know how far I understand him." To Rev. Daniel Jenkins, he suggested on 28 Jan 1943, "I think it is quite likely that [Mackinnon] could write a great book on prayer although very doubtful whether he would write an intelligible one."

4. Mackinnon begins the paragraph in question by declaring that the strongest "case for democracy" lies "hidden in the pages of writers whom the Left would generally write off as conservative," such as Burke. He ends, however: "Ultimately the answer of the democrat to the champion of aristocracy, or kindred politics, is that it is he (the aristocrat) who is the Utopian. For he ignores the reality of original sin, that makes impossible finality in politics, that demands they be conceived as a continual enterprise, to which there can in the nature of things be no ending" (176). It was this statement that provoked TSE's response: as he told John Hayward on 23 June, he wrote to *Christendom* "to ask what Mr. Mackinnon, Fellow of Keble, thinks he means by 'aristocracy.'"

5. TSE refers to a metaphor Mackinnon employs in his conclusion: "In other words, at the same time as we strive to plant again the roots from which true human life must spring, we must recognize that, in the planting, there must be the conscious affirmation of their purpose by the planters" (177).

6. The paragraph in which, according to TSE, Mackinnon lapses from "crystalline lucidity" includes the statement that "democracy ultimately is no more than an attempt to develop, in successive historical situations, techniques to ensure that that power which is necessarily employed in the work of governments shall be rendered responsible to communal aims" (176).

Kipling – The People's Poet

Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information, wrote TSE on 13 July 1943 to request a contribution to a weekly newspaper, *The British Ally* [*Britansky Soyuznik*], published in Moscow by his ministry (1942-48). The newspaper, he explained, had "a rapidly increasing circulation, and we should like at this stage to publish in it articles which go beyond the ordinary limits of propaganda":

> **We have heard from our representatives in Russia that Russian men of letters, and also many young men in the Red Army, are becoming newly interested in modern English literature. We are much encouraged at this opportunity to further Anglo-Russian understanding by providing for their interest.**

TSE immediately expressed his willingness "in principle" to contribute an article, though he pleaded "for some little time on account of other engagements." He also inquired as to "what sort of stuff is acceptable to your Russian paper," a question he said he would "be very glad to go into . . . with one of your London editors" (15 July). He was then put in contact with G. Grafton Green of the ministry's Publications Division, who supplied him with a document on "Russian literary tastes" and suggested Kipling as a topic. By 30 Sept TSE had read "the useful Russian notes" but had "so far had no time to work at or even outline an article." He was still unsure at this point if he wished to return to Kipling, about whom he had written at length in 1941 (6.210).

Prodded by Green four months later, TSE replied wryly on 9 Feb 1944, "The one characteristic of inconvenient promises is that several of them are apt to come home to roost at once and your reminder has unfortunately not come alone." On 26 Mar he finally delivered an untitled typescript of nine pages, which he described as "a general article on Kipling." He told Green, "I have striven to approach the standard of simplicity required; and I hope it is the right kind of simplicity; but it does not come natural to me and the result may merely be dull." He voiced a further misgiving about the principles the ministry had urged on him: "the trouble is that simple people are sometimes very shrewd also, and able to see through a deliberate attempt to be simple."

Over six months passed before the article finally appeared in *The British Ally*, 41 (8 Oct 1944), 6, and 42 (15 Oct 1944), 6, editorially titled "Kipling – The People's Poet" [*Narodnyy Poet*]. It was never published in English.

Rudyard Kipling was, I think, a great writer: but his work is very difficult to classify, and the man is very difficult to explain. In the first place his work is extremely varied. There have been great novelists and story writers – Walter Scott, Emily Brontë, Thomas Hardy, D. H. Lawrence are a few examples – who also wrote some poetry; there have been fewer poets who also wrote prose fiction. Kipling does not belong with either group. He was equally skilled in both prose and verse; and the characteristic and peculiar form which he developed in later life, is a story with a poem before it and one after it; and the story and the two poems, though they may at first sight seem to have little relation to each other, form one whole. Then, again, most writers of fiction specialize in a particular locality which they know best, whether rural or urban, or in a particular stratum of society in which they belong. Kipling knows no such restrictions. He seems to take any subject which appeals to him, and write about them all equally well. He travels about the world, and makes himself at home anywhere; he investigates any craft or technique, and quickly masters it. He wrote a book about the American deep-sea fishermen,[1] and several stories and poems about the English country labourer. He had an equal curiosity about engineering techniques: he wrote a story about radiotelegraphy before the modern developments of wireless had begun, and a story about international air transport before flying was more than experimental, a story worked out in minute detail.[2] Nor was he limited to the present and the future; some of his best stories and poems are about the periods of the Roman, the Saxon and Danish, and the Norman occupations of Britain.

Such versatility is disconcerting. But what makes Kipling still more of a puzzle is the fact that he was not a typical Englishman; and, indeed, from some points of view hardly an Englishman at all – hardly even a European. The failure to grasp and allow for this peculiarity has led to much misunderstanding, and much irrelevant praise or abuse, still more from other Englishmen than from foreign critics. This solitariness cannot be attributed solely to circumstances. He was born in India, and spoke Hindustani as a child; he was sent to England to school, and returned to India at the age of seventeen. An ordinary boy, however, might have this history – many ordinary boys have had it – without becoming anything but a variety of Englishman. But the things which are un-English about Kipling go very much deeper; though there is another circumstance which may have fortified them. Hindu India is a country of caste; and its atmosphere tended to strengthen the class distinctions – strong in Kipling's youth – amongst the European residents there. Kipling was not, in India, a member of one of the recognized castes: the administrative, military, judicial or commercial. His father had been the director of an Art Museum; he himself became a reporter and writer on a newspaper. Perhaps there is something about this profession which tends to make a man an observer, with a detached view of things. Anyway, it is important to remark, that in his stories of English life in India it is as an observer, rather than a member of, English society in India that he writes – and sometimes as a merciless observer. He cannot be fitted in to any English "class." Nor can he be fitted in to the Christian tradition. Most Europeans, whether they are Christians or not, are obviously rather different from what they would have been if their ancestors had not been Christians. Kipling is different; his mind and sensibility are, in some ways, Asiatic; his affinities are with Islam and with Mithraism, and even (as in his portrait of the Lama in *Kim*) with Buddhism.[3] So he is not altogether easy for the Englishman, or the European, to understand. Nor, perhaps, is he easy to understand, for the modern Indian with European ideas.

Kipling was not, in my opinion, a great novelist: everyone has read two of his novels, *The Light That Failed* and *Captains Courageous*, but if his reputation depended upon these, it would not be very high or very permanent.[4] He was a great story-teller, and for the number and variety of first-rate short stories few English writers can be compared with him. *Kim* is a story of India which has the length of a novel, and, if I was limited to one of his stories, this is the one I should choose. Yet it is not a novel, but rather a very long short story; and what one remembers of it is not plot or action, but descriptive scenes and individual Indian characters: nowhere has he drawn more living portraits than four of the characters in *Kim*: the Pathan horse-dealer, the Indian Queen, the Bengali secret agent, and the Tibetan monk.

Kipling's earlier stories are for the most part of India and of English life in India. Of these the most famous, and among them some of the best, are concerned with three particular English soldiers, though one to which I should call particular attention, "The Man Who Would Be King," is the story of two soldiers who do not appear in any other story.[5] And here I should like to mention the type of hero which appears most frequently in these stories, and which Kipling appears most to admire. It is not, as a rule, the man who wins great success or power, but the man of unrecognized courage, endurance, or devotion to duty – sometimes, indeed, the outcasts or apparent failure. The three soldiers in the army in India with one or another of whom many of his earlier tales are concerned ("Soldiers Three") are all men with some tragedy in their private lives. One is an Irishman, one a Yorkshireman, and one a London cockney.[6] The most loveable of all the three, Mulvaney the Irishman, has been more than once promoted to sergeant and again degraded for drunkenness; but he is a good soldier. Courage and devotion to duty are the virtues which Kipling most admires.

Kipling believed very strongly in the British Empire, which he saw as a community of many races in which the English had the greatest responsibility. His interest was in those men who served that Empire, and especially in those who served it without adequate reward or recognition. His stories and poems of soldiers and army life, therefore, were designed to win respect, not for "militarism," but for the soldier's profession; and especially for the ordinary soldier in the ranks – at a time when the man who joined the army as a private, for a period of five or ten years' service overseas, was much less well educated, and had much less hope of promotion, than the professional soldier to-day. The poem "Tommy" (few of his poems are better known than this) is a bitter satire on the difference of the public attitude toward the common solider in peacetime from what it was when the soldier's services were needed.[7]

Kipling's stories, in many volumes, are of such variety that it is impossible to give any impression, from a few, of what the rest are like. But, in general, we may say that as we follow his work from youth to age, it becomes apparent that his stories have nearly always a purpose behind them. He knew that he could always entertain his readers, and he had a large public; but there is a more earnest intention behind this entertainment. The storyteller can have influence through the examples which he sets before his readers to admire or dislike; and certainly courage, endurance, devotion to duty and indifference to success and popularity are ideals which he always maintains. What he has to convey, both generally and in particular stories, is not an abstract political or religious philosophy, but rather a kind of insight, the insight by which he foresaw the possibilities of radiotelegraphy and flying machines, and by which, in a poem written in 1932 ("The Storm Cone") he foretold the menace of Germany and the disaster of the present time. His belief that if he spoke directly no one would listen, but that if he wrapped up his meaning in a story a few might understand, is bitterly expressed in his poem "The Fabulists":

When all the world would keep a matter hid,
   Since Truth is seldom friend to any crowd,
Men write in fable as old Aesop did,
   Jesting at that which none will name aloud.
And this they needs must do, or it will fall
Unless they please they are not heard at all.[8]

Yet in telling the story and leaving the readers to draw the moral, Kipling was not merely adopting the only method which his audience would accept; he was taking the method best suited to his own talents.

When, in middle life, Kipling settled in the Sussex village where he passed the rest of his days, he drew much of his subject matter, as he always did, from what he could observe about him; but here, what he observed was also the history of England. Two books, *Puck of Pook's Hill*, and *Rewards and Fairies*, were designed primarily for boys and girls, and consist of a series of stories each set in a period of English history, from the time of the Roman occupation down.[9] His method was to create characters of the types which he understood, and show them leading the lives of ordinary people of their periods; and to bring out, at the same time, both the continuity of history, and the essential similarity of human beings at all ages of history. In this way he makes the past very actual. Though these stories were intended for children, and his *Jungle Books* for younger children, and his *Just-So Stories* for the youngest, none of them are merely children's books.[10] Those who have read them as children re-read them as adults; and find them to contain a deeper meaning. There are indeed very few of his tales which cannot be read simply as interesting stories; and very few which have not also a more serious meaning for those who can find it.

Among his later volumes of short stories, such as *Debits and Credits*, and *Limits and Renewals*, is to be found some of his finest work.[11] Courage, endurance, and devotion to duty – a stoic philosophy – provide still the lesson of his characters, whether in a Roman centurion stationed on the North Wall, or a poor woman dying of cancer in a Sussex village.[12] Among his later stories, as among his earlier, are some dealing with more macabre subjects, for he was always interested in the borders of insanity. There is an early tale, "The End of the Passage," in which an official in a lonely Indian outpost is determined to carry on his work, although going mad from heat and overwork; another later story of a light-house keeper in the East Indies who becomes insane from solitude and watching the tides.[13] This fight against madness recurs in a late story, "In the Same Boat."[14] Some of the stories – "The Wish House" and "They" are late stories – verge upon the supernatural; certainly Kipling was as interested in the world of dream and nightmare as he was in the world of adventure and science.[15]

I have, so far, said nothing of Kipling's poetry. It is very largely "occasional" in character: that is, many poems have their origin in some political event, or in some idea which Kipling wishes to put forward. They are therefore poems intended to *act* upon the reader, to induce him to attend to some matter which the author deemed important. Many of the earlier poems deal with the life of the professional soldier, the private in the ranks, for the same purpose as some of the stories to which I have referred. These early poems are distinguished, not only by vigour of language, but by rhythms, similar to those of popular songs, which remain in the reader's mind; so that scraps of them are remembered and repeated wherever the English language is spoken. Some of his most striking poems are poems of admonition and warning: he saw the British people prosperous and successful, and he saw the dangers of their forgetting the necessity for the harder virtues upon which prosperity and success must be founded. In his later years he adopted more and more the practice of linking one or two poems to a story: in his later volumes you will find each story preceded and followed by a poem. The story can of course be read without the poems; and many readers have been inclined to overlook these later poems for that reason. This is a mistake for two reasons: one, because in the poems connected with a story, he expresses the moral and the meaning of that story in a different form; and, second, because among the poems written in this way are some of the finest.

In the structure of his poems, Kipling shows the same endless variety that he shows in the subjects he handles in his stories. No one could handle better the rhythms of the popular music-hall song; but in more conventional, and sometimes in quite difficult forms, he shows himself equally at home; and in "The Song of the Galley Slaves" (which is supposed to be written by the hero of the story "'The Finest Story in the World'") he manages very successfully a form of free verse.[16]

I have said, and I wish to repeat, that Kipling is unique in the way in which his stories and his poems are related. Most writers put the best of themselves either into poetry or into prose, and you can get a fair impression of them from their work in the one of these forms of art in which they distinguished themselves most. You can read Kipling's stories and ignore his poems, or you can read his poems and ignore his stories; but in either case you will fail to get his full measure. For complete expression, his message required the use of both prose and verse.

Kipling was concerned with the British Empire, but that represents only a part of his work. Elsewhere, it is rather the Roman Empire which claims his admiration; and, in other stories and poems, his devotion is given to a small corner of agricultural England and its history. Sometimes, as I said, he is concerned with the possibilities of science, as in "The Night Mail," a fantasy of aviation; with sport, as in "The Maltese Cat," a marvelous description of a game of polo from the point of view of the polo pony; sometimes, as in a poem, "The Land," or in a story, "Friendly Brook," with the knowledge of agriculture and the land.[17] And when he writes of India, it is the Indian characters in the stories who are the most alive. But in all his writing, it is the same natural virtues of man, often better illustrated in the humble than in the great, and in the apparent failures better than in the successful in a worldly way, which he holds up for our emulation.[18]

NOTES

1. *Captains Courageous*, Kipling's 1897 novel.

2. "Wireless" (1902) is concerned with long-distance radio transmission – as well as the mysteries of poetic inspiration – and "The Night Mail" (1905) describes transatlantic air travel, with much detail on technology and procedures, only two years into the era of powered flight.

3. Lama: spiritual master or priest in Tibetan Buddhism.

4. *The Light That Failed* (1891) and *Captains Courageous* are Kipling's first two novels; despite TSE's comment in this paragraph, *Kim* (1901) is generally considered his third.

5. Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan, the adventurers in "The Man Who Would Be King" (1888), are former soldiers.

6. Privates Terence Mulvaney (the Irishman), John Learoyd (the Yorkshireman), and Stanley Ortheris (the Cockney) appear in eighteen stories, including seven in *Soldiers Three* (1888).

7. "Tommy" (1890), originally published as "The Queen's Uniform."

8. TSE quotes the first stanza of "The Fabulists" (1917). In his 1941 introduction to *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*, he quotes this poem in its entirety, again to call attention to Kipling's method (6.221).

9. *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906); *Rewards and Fairies* (1910).

10. *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895); *Just So Stories for Little Children* (1902).

11. *Debits and Credits* (1926) and *Limits and Renewals* (1932), books of stories with pendant poems.

12. I.e., the centurion Parnesius, who features in three stories from *Puck of Pook's Hill*; and Grace Ashcroft of "The Wish House" (1924).

13. "At the End of the Passage" (1890); "A Disturber of Traffic" (1891).

14. "In the Same Boat" (1911).

15. "They" (1904).

16. In " 'The Finest Story in the World' " (1891), a young man has memories of a past life as a Greek galley slave.

17. "The Maltese Cat" (1895); "The Land" (1917); "Friendly Brook" (1914).

18. On 15 Sept 1944, TSE wrote G. Grafton Green, "It is very gratifying to know that my article on Kipling appears to be suited to the Moscow public. I am certainly willing to try to do the same thing about Yeats, as I know his work pretty well. I cannot, however, hold out any promise for the near future. It might well be several months before I could give you what I want." The idea of a similar article on Yeats does not appear to have been pursued.

The Responsibility of the European Man of Letters

In early Oct 1944, the actor Robert Speaight, who was doing wartime work for the BBC World Service, introduced TSE to his colleague Wolf P. Rilla. Within a few days of their meeting, TSE had given Rilla a draft of a short broadcast script, and on 24 Oct Rilla replied:

> Subject to your approval I have slightly re-arranged the text. Within the context of the programme, I feel your first paragraph would be unnecessary, and we would save about a half minute by cutting it out. In any case, the main points you want to make are contained entirely in the rest of the script. I have re-arranged the text of one passage purely from the point of view of clarity for the listener.
>
> I will ring you in the morning, as you suggested in your note, to ask you for your approval of the final text and to arrange with you about the recording.

TSE told Mary Trevelyan on 30 Oct, "I have just recorded a wee broadcast of 1½ minutes on the Responsibility of Men of Letters for the European Service, and am to try to repeat it in French and German." The date of the actual broadcast is unknown; nor is it clear whether the rebroadcasts in French and German took place.

The final two-page script of the broadcast, as edited by Rilla and approved by TSE, is in the Houghton (bMS Am 1691 [36]). The deleted opening paragraph read as follows:

> It would be an impertinence for me to speak to you of the responsibility of the man of letters in the period which is immediately before us, unless I first confessed the limits of my own commission. For I am speaking to men of letters, many of whom cannot yet answer me: some of whom, perhaps, never will. What I have to say is the view of one man, who can represent only one country, and only one generation in that country. The background of no two generations has been quite the same: no two countries have suffered in quite the same way. I can only make one contribution to the discussion of a company which is scattered and still for the most part silent.

The other editorial change Rilla mentions comprises a reordering of TSE's sentences to streamline the presentation of the three principles outlined in the final paragraph.

I do not suggest that the responsibilities of men of letters are, or will be, fundamentally different from what they always have been: only the emphasis, on one responsibility rather than another, can vary. The permanent responsibility of each of us is towards the preservation and the development of his own language: and in bearing that responsibility we engage in a perpetual civil war against those who would arrest that development, and against those who would corrupt it. But we should know, after the mutual isolation of these five years, that no one language, and no one literature, of Europe, can maintain itself in full health and vigour when cut off from communication with the others. Thus our several responsibilities are related to a common responsibility.

The man of letters may or may not concern himself directly with politics; that is a question of his personal interests and talents. If he does, the particular political philosophy to which he adheres is again a matter of personal bias. There is no one political philosophy which imposes itself upon men of letters as such. But while we may find ourselves, in the future as in the past, holding dissimilar and even contradictory political views, there are some principles on which men of letters should, I think, agree; and which for us should take precedence over politics. The first of these is that the writer should always be in a certain sense in opposition. He should be jealous to preserve the tradition of the culture of his people and of Europe; but in so doing he must find himself constantly opposed to current tendencies and to popular values. So much great literature is, in one aspect, a criticism, and often a severe criticism, of the society in which the author lived, that, if the man of letters is not to criticize he must be silent; therefore we must maintain our right to freedom of speech. The second principle which I have in mind is the preservation of the tradition of humanism in education, which we, as Europeans, derive in common from Rome, Greece and Israel. The third is the restoration of the unity in variety of Europe. No political structure can guarantee this; any political structure may, in practice, disturb the balance of it. Cultural isolation, and cultural uniformity, are both the enemies of culture. And just as each of our countries, when it is in health, is a unity of local cultures in a national culture; so Europe, if it is to recover health, must be a unity of diverse nations in a European culture.

Notes for a lecture on John Milton[1]

For his second lecture at the Churchill Club, the London intellectual center for American servicemen and servicewomen, TSE drew up two pages of notes on Milton, the second consisting entirely of quotations from Johnson's "Life of Milton" illustrating the points outlined on the first. The notes stand as an intermediary text between Eliot's major 1936 and 1947 pieces on Milton, "Milton I" (5.371) and "Milton II," recapitulating ideas from the former while anticipating others from the latter.

On the Churchill Club, see the headnote to "Walt Whitman and modern poetry" (6.783), delivered earlier in 1944. TSE gave his talk on Milton on 29 Nov. He spoke ironically of the event to John Hayward, writing on 31 Oct, amid news of German V-2 rocket attacks, "Jane Clark and the Churchill Club are after me again," and commenting afterward, on 5 Dec, "Churchill Club over. Not such a bright audience as before, I thought; the sharper lads seem mostly to have departed."

TSE's handwritten insertions are shown here in italics.

Controversy. The reason for so much heat can only be that Milton has become a SYMBOL. For some he represents Protestantism; for some, Liberalism, Parliamentary government and democracy; for others, the opposite of everything they dislike about modern poetry. But Milton doesn't fit very well into any party: Mr. Lewis has defended his theological orthodoxy, and Mr. Wilson Knight has made him out to be a kind of monarchist.[2] And one of the curious things about the people who have undertaken his defence against people like me, is that they do not always convince me that they enjoy his poetry. Exception: Mr. Williams.[3]

I am not concerned now with Milton as a Great Whig Myth. And the fact that he was an unpleasant man is nothing against him as a poet. Very few poets have been nice men. What is important is his egotism. One has to understand this. It accounts for the erroneous view that Satan is the hero of P.L. He is not the hero: it is simply that Milton discharges a great deal of his own spleen and pride through Satan, and as Milton is lacking in humility, so is Satan, and so indeed is Samson. Milton is the type that is in the centre of his own universe, like Wordsworth and James Joyce. This has to be understood and accepted, if we are to appreciate their work.

Which of my past objections to Milton do I stick to?

1. Bad influence. Not a strong case. Accept Mr. Tillyard.[4] I said this before Joyce had any influence at all, so now I revise my opinion. My remarks on this point belong to the "politics" of art, like the censure of Pope and Dryden by the Lake Poets. They had a right to this opinion when they advanced it: Matthew Arnold, coming later, did not.[5] Better at a certain period that people should admire a different kind of poetry. (So I was using Milton, like other people, as a Symbol.)
2. Lack of visual imagination. Examples from Paradise Lost. No visual consistency. Depends upon hearing. Was Homer blind? Milton's blindness merely aggravated a natural weakness.

Bk II. 3. Grotesqueness. *Renaissance & myth.*
4. Lack of sense of humour.[6] *Size, proportion and space*
5. Lack of human interest. *Riot of Names*[7]
6. Excesses and limitations of his style
Licentious pleasure [?] in words >
Smith & Bridges.[8]

JOHNSON.

2. Visual imagination. "[H]is images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy, of immediate observation. He saw nature, as Dryden expresses it, through the spectacles of books."[9]

Grotesque –
"The confusion of spirit and matter, which pervades the whole narration of the war of Heaven, fills it with incongruity; and the book in which it is related is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased" [74].

5. Human interest. "The want of human interest is always felt" [73].

6. Style. "Through all his greater works there prevails an uniform peculiarity of diction, a mode and cast of expression which bears

> little resemblance to that of any former writer; and which is so far removed from common use, that an unlearned reader, when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by a new language.
>
> "This novelty has been, by those who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words suitable to the grandeur of his ideas. 'Our language,' says Addison, 'sunk under him.' But the truth is, that, both in prose and verse, he had formed his style by a perverse and pedantic principle. He was desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom. This in all his prose is discovered and condemned; for there judgment operates freely, neither softened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but such is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration" [76].[10]

NOTES

1. The two-page TS with holograph insertions for this unpublished lecture is in the Houghton (bMS Am 1691 [40]), archivally titled "[Animadversions on Milton]." Accompanying the TS is a provenance card from Donald Gallup: "Notes for a talk given in November 1944 before the Churchill Club, 'the American soldiers' highbrow meeting-place.' Recd. from T.S.E. December 1944."

2. C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to "Paradise Lost"* (London: Oxford UP, 1942), especially the chapter on "The Theology of *Paradise Lost*"; and G. Wilson Knight, *Chariot of Wrath: The Message of John Milton to Democracy at War* (London: Faber & Faber, 1942). TSE expands on his remarks about these studies in "Milton II."

TSE corresponded briefly with Lewis on the subject of his *Preface* in Feb-Mar 1943. Their conversation led to TSE's rereading not only his own 1936 essay on Milton but the whole of *Paradise Lost*. "I emerge from this most recent study of that Secondary Epic (as Lewis would call it) with my lack of faith confirmed," he told John Hayward on 9 Mar. An Anglo-Irish novelist, literary critic, and lay theologian, Lewis (1898-1963) was then teaching at Magdalen College, Oxford. TSE also corresponded with Knight over the publication of *Chariot of Wrath*, accepting the MS and offering terms of publication in a letter of 6 Nov 1941.

3. Charles Williams, "Introduction," *The English Poems of John Milton* (London: Oxford UP, 1940), vii-xx. TSE remarks of this text in "Milton II": "It is not a comprehensive essay; it is notable primarily because it provides the best prolegomenon to *Comus* which any modern reader could have; but what distinguishes it throughout . . . is the author's warmth of feeling and his success in communicating it to the reader. In this, so far as I am aware, the essay of Williams is a solitary example."

4. E. M. W. Tillyard (1889-1962), a British literary scholar, was Master of Jesus College, Cambridge from 1945 to 1959. In his *Milton* (New York: Dial Press, 1930), 355-60, Tillyard respectfully defended his subject against TSE's argument in "The Metaphysical Poets" that the

seventeenth-century "dissociation of sensibility" could be attributed in part to Milton's influence (2.380-81). TSE quotes and accedes to Tillyard's criticism in "Milton II."

5. In "Thomas Gray," Arnold condemns Pope and Dryden for composing poetry "in their wits," whereas "genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul." For TSE's critique of this argument, see *UPUC*, where he concludes: "It was justifiable for Coleridge and Wordsworth and Keats to depreciate Dryden and Pope, in the ardour of the changes which they were busy about; but Arnold was engaged in no revolution, and his shortsightedness can only be excused" (4.663).

6. TSE may be recalling George Saintsbury in *A Short History of English Literature* (New York: Macmillan, 1898): "Milton's character was not amiable, and its harshness was no doubt accentuated, both in life and letters, by his singular want of humour; but it only concerns us in so far as it affects his writings" (393).

7. Saintsbury cites a number of moments in *Paradise Lost* as exemplifying the best English "blank verse out of drama," among these "the riot of names in the description of the view from the topmost mount of Paradise" (i.e., in XI.377-411) (400). TSE writes of the same passage in "Milton I": "I feel that this is not serious poetry, not poetry fully occupied about its business, but rather a solemn game" (5.377).

8. Presumably Logan Pearsall Smith, *Milton and His Modern Critics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1940); and Robert Bridges, *Milton's Prosody* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1893; rev. ed. 1921). TSE briefly discusses Bridges's book in "Milton II." Smith, in addition to rebutting TSE's earlier charges against Milton, devotes a short chapter to Milton's "love of words, simply for their sound and their associations," as exemplified especially in his litanies of names (61-63).

9. *Lives* 71. Subsequent references to this edition are given in brackets.

10. TSE quotes this paragraph and its predecessor in their entirety in "Milton II," commenting, "This criticism seems to me substantially true: indeed, unless we accept it, I do not think we are in the way to appreciate the peculiar greatness of Milton."

Britain and America: Promotion of Mutual Understanding

The Times Educational Supplement (4 Nov 1944) 532

Few persons will deny the importance of developing a more intimate acquaintance between Britain and America in the field of education. But many of us who would cordially share the hope may have failed to consider why the aim is desirable or what form this intimacy should assume or what steps should be taken to bring it about.

If we do not try to answer these questions we may fall into one of two errors. We may think of the purpose of such closer association as being merely the swapping of useful hints, the adoption in one country of successful methods which have been invented and tried out in the other. If that were all there was to it the difference between Anglo-American relations and the relations of each of these two countries with others would be only a matter of degree, for we ought, I presume, always to be on the alert to take advantage of any useful invention anywhere.

On the other hand, we might fall into the mistake of supposing that our goal should be, through readjustments on each side of the water, to arrive at a finally uniform Anglo-American system, such that every teacher and every pupil could be transferred from one side to the other indifferently. Such an ideal would be mistaken first by ignoring the fact that education must combine the universal and the particular and make citizens of the world who are at the same time citizens of particular places; and, secondly, by taking for granted that the educational "systems" of America and Britain ever can be, or ought to be, identical.

TEACHING OF HISTORY

I do not mean to deny, what is certainly true, that there is much to be learned on each side by the study and adaptation of successful methods on the other; nor do I deny that there are certain areas in which a closer approach to uniformity should be aimed at. Such areas are geography and history, and also the history of literature in the English language. I am not sure that history ought to be taught in quite the same way, from quite the same point of view, or even (at an early stage) with the same books, in

England and Scotland; and I am sure that it cannot be taught identically in London and Los Angeles, for all history looks a little different according to the point on the globe from which we look at it. The teaching of history need not be uniform, but, on the other hand, it should not give contradictory interpretations of the same facts. Professor Polanyi has suggested that even science has its local character and tradition.[1] I have no opinion on this point, but I am sure that the first necessity is mutual knowledge and understanding. The final goal is the enduring cooperation and harmony of the English-speaking peoples in the interest of peace and civilization. To hope to expedite this happy state by assimilation of educational systems might be a tempting but injudicious short cut in a process which should take place naturally and, therefore, must take place slowly. But at this stage knowledge and understanding in matters of education between Britain and America are, I think, of primary importance, of an importance much greater than is represented by any conference of experts, for it affects the whole of Anglo-American relations.

For this reason Mr. Kenneth Lindsay's article published in *The Times Educational Supplement* of October 14 ought to receive careful attention.[2] Mr. Lindsay knows what he is talking about: what I have to say was prompted by his article, and is only meant as a contribution to the discussion of it. I am very glad that he has reminded us of the essential participation of Canada: and indeed Canada may have an additional role as interpreter. I am also glad that Mr. Lindsay mentions such experiments and innovations as those of St. John's (Annapolis), and the controversy in the field of the philosophy of education, represented by the names of Professor Dewey and President Hutchins.[3] Such experiment and theory are not enough studied in England: to estimate the success of an experiment, and to interpret a theory, requires understanding of the different conditions in the one case, and of the different terminology in the other, which prevail in America; but we can learn from both successes and failures, and from theories with which we disagree as well as from those which we accept.

There is only one point in Mr. Lindsay's article which arouses some misgiving: not so much from what he says or means, as from its being accepted without attention to other considerations. Principal Murray, of Exeter, writing in *The Times*, expresses some doubt, which I share, as to the expectations to be realized by the foundation of Chairs of Comparative Education; and I feel that we ought not to overestimate the amount that could be accomplished by either a "United States-United Kingdom Committee on Education" or an "International Education Office."[4] I do not suggest that these would be bad things; but the purpose which seems to me worth while is too comprehensive to be achieved solely or even primarily by governmental organizations. It can only be realized through the happy concurrence of efforts of communication between individual and individual, school and school, private body and private body, carrying out particular purposes which combine towards a greater end. Our purpose should exceed any particular formulation of it.

As an instance, of a modest kind, of the sort of voluntary and unofficial activity which is needed, I may be permitted to mention the recent educational work of "Books Across the Sea."[5] This is an Anglo-American body, depending upon private membership, which was founded as two "circles," one in New York and one in London, equal and self-governing, but each dependent upon the other for carrying out its work. Its membership – of the London and New York circles respectively, and now of circles in Edinburgh and Boston also – is open to anybody who wants, either for particular purposes or from general curiosity, to know about the other country. It came into being early in the war, when the export of books between Britain and America had, from lack of transport space, virtually ceased. That intellectual communication through books should be arrested, just when it was most important that each country should know what the other was thinking, became a matter of great seriousness. "Books Across the Sea" undertook to form small but steadily increasing libraries for the use of its members of new American books in London, and of new English books in New York, chosen immediately after publication by selection committees in each centre. This function is still necessary, and is still performed; our difficulty in London is to accommodate the expanding library in limited quarters.

I only explain, however, the founders' purpose of "Books Across the Sea" in order to make clear that no special work for schools, for teachers, or for children was originally contemplated. What is now being done is an unforeseen but natural and inevitable development of the purpose which was defined as "the promotion of better understanding between the English-reading peoples through books."

In giving a brief account of the kinds of activity in the educational field into which "Books Across the Sea" has found itself led, I must remind the reader that for every piece of work done here, in conveying knowledge of America, a parallel piece of work has been done by the very active New York circle in disseminating knowledge of Britain in America.

EXCHANGE OF BOOKS

Collections of books, photographs, and other material illustrative of American life have been lent to over 100 schools. Teachers are also encouraged to bring or send pupils to examine books, periodicals, maps, &c., in the reading room. Textbooks in actual use in America are in the library; in particular, those on American history are often asked for. Books on American education have also been in demand. The American textbooks are of interest not only to teachers but to publishers of schoolbooks in this country. The staff, incidentally, have answered many inquiries, and obtained information from America when it was not available here. In addition, much work is done for the children directly: the encouragement of the preparation and exchange of "Hand-made Books on Daily Life," through which American and British children can give each other a picture of their school life; the arrangement of individual correspondence between British and American children; and exhibitions of children's books. The provision of books and information about America is of course only the one-half of the work: the other half consists in supplying the New York circle with books and information about Britain. When exhibitions are given, it is attempted, so far as possible, to provide parallel exhibitions in London and New York at the same time: for instance, an exhibition of war-time English children's books is being held in New York, and an exhibition of war-time American children's books in London, both during the week of November 12.[6]

I have given "Books Across the Sea" as an example of one kind of private activity "towards an educational link": that this work has, as I said, imposed itself in the course of carrying out the more general purpose of "promoting better understanding" is a guarantee of the need for it. There is opportunity for other private enterprises and, as the library of "Books Across the Sea" serves a different and more popular purpose from the valuable official library – still not well enough known – being formed by Dr. Heindel in Grosvenor Square, so such private organizations can in other ways supplement the work of government and more public bodies.[7] The establishment and maintenance of cultural relations between Britain and America, as between any two countries, will in the future depend upon the quality of three contributions: the intelligence of the State, the zeal of the community, and the friendship of individuals.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), Hungarian-born chemist and philosopher, became a naturalized British citizen in 1939. He was a late participant in the Moot, though his attendance never overlapped with TSE's. In *The Autonomy of Science* (Manchester: Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, 1943), Polanyi argues that "science as a whole is based – in the same way as the practice of any single research school – on a local tradition, consisting of a fund of intuitive approaches and emotional values which can only be transmitted from one generation to the other through the medium of personal collaboration" (27). TSE complimented Polanyi on 7 June 1944: "I was impressed both by this pamphlet and by other writings of yours which I have seen and to which J. H. Oldham has referred." His effort to publish Polanyi at Faber & Faber, however, was frustrated by the scientist's existing contract with Routledge.

Sending the present article to H. C. Dent, editor of the *TES*, on 22 Oct 1944, TSE wrote: "I have left the title to you. And I can never remember whether Polyani spells his name Polyani or Polanyi; I am in the country and have nothing to which to refer. I should be obliged if you could have the spelling checked." In spite of this request, TSE's misspelling ("Polyani") was retained when the article was printed; it has been editorially corrected here.

2. Kenneth Lindsay (1897-1991), MP for Kilmarnock. A National Labourite since the 1931 split in the Labour Party, Lindsay served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education from 1937 to 1940. In July 1945, he would be elected MP for the Combined English Universities. Lindsay's "British-American Relations: Towards an Educational Link" urges the sharing of educational ideas through international committees and conferences, a foreign exchange program for teachers and administrators, and the perpetuation of such wartime organizations as the British Information Services (496).

3. In 1937, St. John's College adopted a new curriculum centered on the "Great Books" – a curriculum also advocated by Robert Maynard Hutchins (1899-1977), president (and later chancellor) of the University of Chicago. In the late 1930s, Hutchins clashed with John Dewey in a public debate over educational philosophy, with Dewey defending a more socially engaged and experiential model of education.

4. Lindsay reported, with evident approval, that the first conference of the Joint Canada-United States Committee on Education had "unanimously endorsed" the formation of such bodies. He also lamented "that in the whole of Great Britain there is no Chair of Comparative Education, and therefore no centre around which an international study of education can be focused."

The politician and educator John Murray (1879-1964) was, from 1926 to 1951, principal of the University College of the South West of England, Exeter (renamed the University of Exeter in 1955). In his response to Lindsay, "Anglo-American Links," *The Times* (19 Oct 1944), 5, Murray wrote, "'A chair of comparative education' sounds well. But is there any such thing as 'comparative education'"? He was wary, too, of the establishment of an "international education office": "Central organs tend to centralize things. They can hardly help creating a prejudice in favour of uniformity. . . . The money would be as well or better spent on sabbatical travel for teachers."

5. On TSE's role in this transatlantic organization, see the headnote to his 1943 presidential message (6.418).

6. See TSE's contribution to *Bridgebuilders*, a 15 Nov BBC broadcast on the subject of these exhibitions (6.563).

7. Richard Heathcote Heindel (1912-79), American social historian, administrator, and author of *The American Impact on Great Britain, 1898-1914* (1940). From 1942 to 1945, Heindel was founding director of the American Library at the U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square. After the war, he would head the U.S. State Department's new Division of Libraries and Institutes (1946-47).

TSE's commendation of the American Library echoes that of Lindsay, who wrote that it "would be a tragedy" if the library were "allowed to break up" at the end of the war. Housing Britain's largest collection of U.S. literature, the library in fact survived until 1966, when it closed despite protests in the British press. Its contents were donated to the University of London's new Institute of United States Studies, now part of the Institute for the Study of the Americas.

On the Place and Function of the Clerisy[1]

The subject presents itself to me first in the form of three questions:

What is the place of the clerisy, if it exists, in the social structure?
Assuming it to exist, what is its composition?
In view of its composition, what is its function?

The clerisy (if it exists) must be an *élite* and not a *class*.[2] The distinction may appear too obvious to need mention, yet I suspect that in discussion the two are often confused. An élite is not a substitute for a class, or a class for an élite. This might be put simply by saying that the unit of the class is the family, and the unit of the élite the individual. A man is born a member of a class, but becomes a member of an élite by virtue of individual superiority developed by training; he does not thereby cease to be a member of the class into which he was born, nevertheless he is partially separated from the other members of his class who are not members of the same élite. No man can change his class, but his successful effort or his incapacity may, and often does, result in his children belonging to a somewhat different class from his own.

We have therefore to consider élites against the background of class. The position of an élite in a classless society would no doubt be very different; but we have no experience, and no historical knowledge, of such a society, except perhaps at a very low stage of development. It is sometimes assumed, by those who want to eat their cake and have it too, that the advantages of a class society, without its disadvantages, can be obtained by having a classless society with a systematic selection of individuals who will form an élite. But to destroy the foundations of the class (the transmission of advantages from one generation to the next) is to destroy what has produced the good element in class as well as the bad. You will get something quite different; and you do not know what it will be like. (This, I think, is the fundamental criticism of Happold's *Towards a New Aristocracy*.[3]) I am not here concerned with whether such a social structure would be better or worse; I only think that it is better to begin by considering what the clerisy is and has been in such society as we know, before considering what it ought to be in a different form of society.

One of the chief merits of class is that it is an influence for stability; one of the chief merits of the clerical élite is that it is an influence for change. To some extent, therefore, there is, and I think should be, a conflict between class and clerical élite. On the one hand, the clerical élite is dependent upon whatever is the dominant class of its time; on the other hand, it is apt to be critical of, and subversive of, the class in power. (This peculiar dual relationship may be illustrated from the position and influence of the French *philosophes* under the *ancien régime*,[4] and that of such men as Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold in the upper-middle class Victorian era.)

When we speak of class, we must sometimes be thinking of a division of two, or three classes; and sometimes of the innumerable and almost imperceptible subdivisions which are characteristic of English society. Unless we keep both in mind at once we are liable to fall into error. Hence, when we say that the majority of the clerisy have in the past been drawn from the middle class, we mean that above and below two not very distinct frontiers, very few distinguished "clerics" are to be found. They come from the middle, though when compared one with another great differences of background appear. But the origins of the clerisy are one thing, and their relation to the dominant class another. The history of English literature can be traced in relation to the publics for which the men of letters wrote (not precisely the public which read their works or saw their plays, but the public which, consciously or unconsciously, they aimed to please or interest). The general tendency has been to write for a larger and larger public, and therefore the writer could only take for granted what his public had in common – that is, less and less. Since the Victorian age, there has also been apparent a contrary tendency – to write for a smaller and smaller public, but this tendency does not represent a simple *reaction*. The authors who (frequently derided) write for a small public are not writing for a more cultivated class, but for a heterogeneous number of peculiar individuals of various classes – for a kind of élite. The clerisy writing for the clerisy. Lord Elton does not understand the causes of this.[5]

So far, then, as "men of letters" are concerned (using that term as loosely as possible) the immediate future does not offer any prospect of a clerisy appealing to a classless society, but writing for, and to some extent we hope in criticism of a lower-middle-class society. We may get two kinds of clerics: those who are too closely identified with their public, and those who are too isolated from any public.

ÉLITE AND ÉLITES

There is some danger of confusion, in speaking sometimes of the singular and sometimes of the plural. I suppose *an* élite is any category of men and women who because of their individual capacities exercise significant power in any particular area. The clerisy is perhaps the most difficult of all élites to distinguish and define. It may be roughly defined as, at the top, those individuals who originate the dominant ideas, and alter the sensibility, of their time; if we recognise sensibility as well as "ideas," we must include some painters and musicians, as well as writers. But when we say *originate*, we must include the new expression of an old idea; when we say *originate* and *alter* we must admit an element of representativeness, of giving expression to, what is already "in the air"; and when we say *of their time*, we must recognise the frequent lapse of time before the detonation of a new idea appears to occur. I only add these qualifications, as a reminder that there are aesthetic, critical and intellectual problems here on to which we might easily get side-tracked.

ÉLITE AND CLASS AGAIN

The clerisy does, I think, tend to spring from a limited number of closely related classes. This may not, at any particular moment, be true of the most outstanding members of the clerisy; the clerisy would cease to be the clerisy, and would merely be a small and rather isolated class, if this were ever altogether true. If class and élite became the same, in the case of the clerisy, it would die of inbreeding. A family which can breed a cleric is not the same as a clerical family. Clerics spring from stock which is itself non-clerical, or not too clerical, but which is capable of producing and rearing clerics. Conversely, clerics do not always marry clerics (no orchids for Mr. Humphry Ward)[6] and even if they do they do best to beget and bring forth non-clerics; the cleric of the third generation is not very healthy stock.

The cleric himself should be partly, though not altogether, emancipated from the class into which he is born; an out-caste. He should, to some extent, be able to look upon, and mix with, all classes as an outsider; just as he should, to some extent, get out of his own century. These are counsels of perfection, to which none of us attain. He should also have a supra-national community of interest with clerics of other nations; so as to work against nationalism and racialism (provincialism) as he does against class.

CLERISY AND CULTURE

It would, I think, be an error to think of the clerisy as the exclusive trustees for, and transmitters of, culture. This implies certainly a very limited notion of culture. The maintenance of culture is a function of the whole people, each part having its own appropriate share of the responsibility; it is a function of classes rather than of élites. The clerisy can help to develop and modify it; they have a part to play, but only a part, in its transmission. If this sometimes appears the most important part, that is not to say that clerics are necessarily the most cultured people. (The artist is not necessarily a "cultured person"; he provides nourishment for other people's culture.)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CLERICS

It is not the business of clerics to agree with each other; they are driven to each other's company by their common dissimilarity from everybody else, and by the fact that they find each other the most profitable people to disagree with, as well as to agree with. They differ from members of a class in having very different backgrounds from each other, and by not being united by prejudices and habits. They are apt to share a discontent with things as they are, but the ways in which they want to change them will be various and often completely opposed to each other. But beyond this, there are two kinds of division between clerics, one horizontal and one vertical. Horizontally, there are the *intellectuals* and the *emotives*. (I avoid here the difficult word "imaginative," because this may be applied to either.) Intellectuals may be insensitive, and emotives may be intellectually feeble or irrational. Difficulties arise, not from this natural division, but from each type failing to recognise its own limitations: otherwise they profit by association with each other, except possibly musicians, who seem to live in a world apart, like some mathematical prodigies.

The point is, however, that we cannot ask for any common mind, or any common action, on the part of the clerics. They have a common function but this is below the level of conscious purposes. They have at least one common interest – an interest in the survival of the clerisy (cf. Mr. Joad's essay in the volume *Can Planning be Democratic?*)[7] but they will have no agreement on how to promote this. Agreement and common action can only be by particular groups of clerics, and is most effectively exercised against some other group of clerics. When clerics can form a group in which formulated agreement is possible, it will be due to affinities which distinguish them from other clerics.

HIERARCHY OF THE CLERISY

I cannot find my copy of *La Trahison des clercs,* and I have not read the book since it first appeared. I remember that I did not think it so good as the author's *Belphégor*.[8] My impression remains that Benda was an example of the Cretan Liar, and that he fell into treason while accusing others;[9] but also that he did not distinguish different grades of *clerc*. The higher grades are those, whether philosophers or artists, who are concerned with the word (the discovery of truth or beauty) rather than with the audience, and the lower those who are more concerned with the audience – either to *influence* it or to *entertain* it, or both. (This does not exclude the possibility that a particular lower-grade cleric may be a *greater* man than a particular high-grade one.) Benda, as I remember, seemed to expect everybody to be a sort of Spinoza.[10] Ideally, and often in practice, the work of the high-grade cleric first affects a lower-grade cleric – those who have some of the motives of the high and some of those of the low. *Man and Superman* may or may not be a popularisation of ideas which Shaw (a middle-grade cleric) took from Samuel Butler (a higher-grade cleric – this irrespective of what we think of the value of his ideas or the unpleasantness of the man);[11] and Shaw's dramatic invention gets down to the lowest dregs of clerisy in the plays of Noël Coward.[12] (If you are going to refuse Coward the title of cleric you will have to draw a line somewhere and you will not find it easy to draw.) Whatever you think of Noël Coward, this general form of influence and dissemination is natural and right. Note, however, that the function of the lower-grade cleric is not simply to travesty or degrade what he gets from the higher, and when he does well, he makes influential the work of men who have done that work with no concern for influence – and that is the profoundest kind of influence. On the other hand, as all intellectual or artistic influence becomes modified, both by the brains which receive it and by its transformation in association with an increasing number of other influences, it ceases to be anything which could interest the man who started it. Philosophers, as well as artists, frequently disapprove violently of their disciples.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DANGERS FOR THE CLERISY

Clerisy may be divided into the *employed* and the *unemployed*. By the former I mean those who are employed as clerics: among the unemployed, in this sense, I include those who have independent incomes, those who earn a living in some way outside of their main interests (e.g., polishing lenses),[13] those who live off the sale of their clerical produce (books, pictures) and those who live as best they can. Obviously, it is not always easy to place a cleric wholly in one category or the other. A university stipendiary may be interested in thinking and such activities, and bored by lecturing and tutoring: the question is the degree to which his paid activities support or interfere with his preferred clerical interests.

It is desirable that there should always be a proportion of employed and a proportion of unemployed clerics. From the point of view of the clerisy, some clerics need both the security and the opportunity to concentrate, which proper employment gives: it is also useful, both for the cleric and for the society in which he works, that he should have the prestige of official or institutional recognition. Other clerics need the independence of unemployment, either for the expression of unpopular views, or for the pursuit of some study the value of which is not immediately apparent to anyone but themselves. It is important also for society that some clerics should be able to do as they please. An excess of employed clerics incurs the danger of discouraging independence: official patronage of the arts in this way, certainly, may have the effect of suppressing everything except the highest level of the mediocre. On the other hand an excess of unemployed clerics is apt to be unsettling: when society produces a large number of unemployed clerical small fry, we have what is called the *intelligentsia*, expressing its discontent in subversive movements, and, in Cairo and such places, overturning trams.[14]

In the present state of society, we are exposed to both of these dangers. In a planned and centralised society, some provision is going to be made for art and thought; so that the tendency may be for official positions to be made for the practitioners of such activities, especially as other means of picking up a living may become more difficult. It is also coming to be believed that a nation's art and thought have some political value in impressing other nations with a sense of that nation's importance, and stimulating an interest in the goods which it has to export, even books and pictures. But at the same time, with the vast extensions of education which are contemplated, there is a danger of producing an excessive number of half-baked clerics, beyond what the machine can find room for.[15] The spread of education may also strengthen the pressure towards a low-grade culture (by which I mean, of course, something quite different from that part of total culture of which the lower orders are the proper guardians) which I mentioned earlier.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the term "clerisy" convey enough meaning to be useful? Does it identify a type of activity such that we can say that a clerisy must exist in any civilised society? Can the function of the clerisy be defined? If so, to what extent is it fulfilled, and to what extent is it in defect, in this island at the present time?
2. Should the term, in extension, be made as inclusive or as exclusive as possible? Consider this in relation to well-known names in philosophy, science, the arts, and the variety stage.
3. If the term comprehends philosophy, science and the arts, each pretty inclusively, what statement can be made about *all* clerics except that they are concerned with "culture"? But (apart from the *descriptive* interest of sociologists and anthropologists) is there any such thing as a direct concern with the *promotion* of culture? Are not clerics concerned with a number of different activities, the total of which, in so far as it happens to form an organic pattern, can be said to represent the culture of the society in which they operate?
4. Is the "culture" of Britain declining in quality? If so, what are the evidences? What steps can or cannot be taken, so that the level can be raised without lowering the highest standards?[16]

NOTES

1. Unpublished in TSE's lifetime, this paper was completed by the beginning of Nov 1944 for consideration by the Moot. Mimeographed copies were distributed to the membership on 10 Nov; responses by Karl Mannheim and Michael Polanyi, and TSE's replies to them, were also circulated for discussion at the Moot meeting at St. Julian's Community, Horsham, West Sussex, 15-18 Dec. TSE's paper was first published, with Valerie Eliot's permission, by Roger Kojecky in *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 240-48. Copies may be found in papers of the Moot at the Institute of Education, University of London, and in the special collections libraries of Keele University and the University of Chicago.

2. Here, as in his discussion of the "Community of Christians" in *ICS*, TSE draws upon but distinguishes from Coleridge's definition of the clerisy in *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830): "My Community of Christians, then, in contrast to Coleridge's clerisy . . . would contain both clergy and laity of superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts. And it would include some of those who are ordinarily spoken of, not always with flattering intention, as 'intellectuals'" (5.702-03).

3. On F. C. Happold and his 1943 book, which advocates government by an elite of trained specialists, see TSE's letter of 22 Oct 1943 to the *Church Times* (6.432-33, n.1).

4. The French intellectuals of the Enlightenment advocated values such as freedom of speech and religion that weakened the power of the monarchy under which they flourished.

5. Godfrey Elton, 1st Baron Elton (1892-1973), historian, politician, biographer, and at this time secretary of the Rhodes Trust, authored *St. George or the Dragon: Towards a Christian Democracy* (London: Collins, 1942). His chapter "The Assault upon Morale," which defends what he calls the "military virtues" of loyalty, courage, endurance, and discipline as "the basis of civilisation itself," denounces modernist literature and art for undermining these values and for "retiring into the ivory castle of an esotericism which refused to address ordinary humanity" (41). Though he does not mention TSE by name, Elton clearly has in mind his 1921 statement that "poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*" (2.381): "It is quite new, this notion that 'good' art or 'good' literature must be 'difficult.' Most of the great writers of the past were best-sellers, deliberately purveying popular entertainment. . . . They wrote to entertain their adult contemporaries in general, and their huge publics enjoyed them naturally and unselfconsciously, with no notion of superiority in possessing the industry or the intelligence to understand something from which ordinary folk were excluded" (42).

6. TSE alludes to the writer, editor, and fellow of Brasenose College Thomas Humphry Ward (1845-1926), husband of the novelist Mary Augusta Arnold, who published under her married name, Mrs. Humphry Ward; and to James Hadley Chase's best-selling crime novel *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (1939), which was turned into a popular play in 1942. Chase's novel was considered lurid in its time, and George Orwell, who found it "sordid and brutal," argued in his 1944 essay "Raffles and Miss Blandish" that it epitomized ominous cultural trends. The novel makes no reference to either Mrs. Humphry Ward or her husband. With reference to clerics marrying clerics, Mrs. Ward herself notes, in *A Writer's Recollections* (London: W. Collins Sons & Co., 1918), "It became plain very soon after our marriage that ours was to be a literary partnership" (143).

7. Subtitle: *A Collection of Essays Prepared for the Fabian Society*, ed. Herbert Morrison (London: Routledge, 1944), including "Culture and the Community" by C. E. M. (Cyril Edwin Mitchinson) Joad (1891-1953), author, philosopher, and mainstay of the BBC's popular wartime program *The Brains Trust*. Joad claims that the "intellectuals of our time" are torn between their sympathy for the "working masses" and the knowledge that their own productivity and status depends on "conditions made possible for us only by an unjust social system" (61). The result is the "treason of the intellectuals protesting against intellect, of the cultured decrying culture" (62), endangering altogether the survival of intellectualism. As a remedy for cultural decline, he argues for equalitarian education under a socialist government. Joad's essay includes an anecdote involving *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* that may account for TSE's allusion to that novel here (see n.6, above).

The entirety of Christopher Hollis's review of *Can Planning Be Democratic?* in the *Tablet* (26 Aug 1945) is dedicated to refuting Joad's essay. "I was much gratified by your observations stimulated by Joad's views on the Cultivation of Culture," TSE wrote Hollis on 28 Aug. "Nothing could express better my own opinions on the subject."

8. In 1928 TSE twice reviewed *La Trahison des clercs* (1927), in "Culture and Anarchy" and in "The Idealism of Julian Benda." In the first, he describes *Belphégor* (1919) as "a careful diagnosis of the maladies of contemporary culture, a book equal in importance to *Culture and*

Anarchy" (3.345); in the second, he describes *La Trahison des clercs* as "the first book of the same type that M. Benda has written since *Belphégor*; it represents some years of meditation and study; we expected a book of the same importance. We are not disappointed" (3.435).

9. The Cretan Liar paradox derives from the sixth-century Cretan poet and philosopher Epimenides and his (decontextualized and slightly misquoted) claim that "all Cretans are liars." Since Epimenides was himself a Cretan, his statement is seen as self-falsifying. TSE thus suggests that, as a cleric, Benda fell under his own condemnation.

10. TSE states in his second review of *La Trahison des clercs* that "the reaction against romantic collectivism (including all forms of communism, fascism, etc.) may just as well lead straight to a romantic individualism. M. Benda, I suspect, is an admirer of Spinoza: and I am not altogether sure that Spinoza's isolation was not rather a misfortune to be pitied, than a quality to be admired" (3.442).

11. In "The Idealism of Julian Benda," TSE names Shaw as an instance of a *clerc* "who might incur M. Benda's displeasure": "what can be said for a disciple of the amateur crankiness of Samuel Butler? I cannot go thoroughly into the case of Shaw, but would only point out that here is the case of a kind of a kind of *trahison* not discussed by M. Benda; Shaw the master of a lucid and witty dialogue prose hardly equaled since Congreve, and of a certain power of observation, squandering these gifts in the service of wornout home-made theories" (3.441). In *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy* (1903), Shaw postulates the existence of a "Life Force" (derived from Butler and other sources), which was ultimately to realize itself through the creation of a race of supermen.

12. In his reply to Eliot's paper, Karl Mannheim responded to this sentence, arguing that popularization of ideas was not necessarily adulteration: "we have to look for new forms of dissemination, in order to get away from the idea of popularisation as mere dilution. With this vision in our mind, Noël Coward is not a publicity agent for the higher cleric but conveys a new type of vibration to a simpler type of mind and brings home the experience of genuineness and originality to the masses. He gives them the same unexpected shock which undermines our complacency whenever we enjoy a great piece of art or listen to a great orator." See "Letter from Karl Mannheim," in "T. S. Eliot's Idea of the Clerisy, and its Discussion by Karl Mannheim and Michael Polanyi in the Context of J. H. Oldham's Moot," by Phil Mullins and Struan Jacobs, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 6.2 (July 2006), 147-76; here, 166.

13. Spinoza's occupation as a lens polisher was related to his scientific interests in optics, microscopes, and telescopes.

14. The Egyptian trade union movement, including the workshops of the railway and tram workers in Boulak, outside Cairo, led to violent strikes in 1934, when workers overturned trams and buses for the first time. By 1942, the movement reached a high level, with strikes spreading through all the industrial centers of the country. As TSE wrote this paper, union organizers were preparing for elections in Jan 1945, to be followed in Sept by their participation in the International Congress of Trade Unions in Paris.

15. The Butler Act, promising free secondary education for all children, had been passed by Parliament and received royal assent on 3 Aug; however, its main provisions were to go into effect after the war and so were still "contemplated" in Nov 1944.

16. Following the distribution of the essay and questions on 10 Nov, Karl Mannheim's reply was circulated to members on 20 Nov, Michael Polanyi's "Letter from Michael Polanyi" on 18

Nov, followed by TSE's "Comments on Mannheim's Letter" and "Comments by T. S. Eliot on Michael Polanyi's Notes on the Clerisy" on 24 Nov, all for discussion by the entire membership at the Moot meeting in Dec, which TSE was unable to attend. The minutes of the meeting have not survived, though the members present are listed by Kojecky (239). The essay and the replies are printed in the *Journal of Classical Sociology* (2006); see n.12 above.

Bridgebuilders[1]

The Books Across the Sea exhibition of American wartime children's books was opened by Sir Ernest Barker on 13 Nov 1944, with TSE in the chair, at Chaucer House, London, coincident with the American exhibition in the Browsing Room at Columbia University.[2] On 18 Nov the *TLS* described the opening ceremony, stating that TSE "reaffirmed his belief that the books that children read for pleasure had an important relation to their education; and that the education of children had an important relation to the future and development of Anglo-American understanding" (564).

The BBC series *Bridgebuilders*, a self-described "bridge of understanding," was broadcast by the North American Service on 15 Nov from the London exhibition. TSE appeared on the program, hosted by Nicholas Stuart, with Noel Streatfeild, an English author of children's books; Eileen Colwell, a distinguished children's librarian; and Alicia Street, chair of the London Circle of Books Across the Sea.

The script of the broadcast on 15 Nov (repeated on 16 Nov) contains TSE's recorded text inserted into the dialogue, from which it has here been extracted. After being introduced earlier as president of Books Across the Sea, "known of course to all of you as one of the leading poets in the world today," TSE read two additional sentences: "Thank you Mr. Stuart and hello listeners in New York. In just a moment or two I'm to have the pleasure of speaking to you about the purpose of these two exhibitions." Next to these lines on the Houghton copy, TSE has noted, "Written by someone else!"

Next week, after the two exhibitions are over, these two collections of books will be starting on their tour of Britain and America respectively. So I don't need to describe the Exhibition we're holding here, because those of you who see the Exhibition of British Children's Books in New York City will be able to picture this one in London. But I should like to explain why Books Across the Sea, in both countries, takes these two exhibitions so seriously. There are two things I want to say about Books Across the Sea in general. First, it was founded early in this war: and but for wartime conditions the need for such an organisation might never have impressed so many people. The normal flow of books both ways stopped. Almost the only books to cross the water were books which were being offered to publishers on the other side. Sometimes these single copies got sunk; sometimes the correspondence about them failed to arrive. So, even when a book did get published on the other side, there was sometimes a long delay. Finally, we had very little paper, so we couldn't accept so many books.

And in any case, some of the important books, on both sides, are books which are important for a small number of people, books which, in normal times, would be imported for the people, and not republished.

The result was, that the two nations could only read very few of each other's books, just at a time when it was more important than ever that each should know what the other was thinking and saying. But the purpose of Books Across the Sea, agreed in London and New York, is simply "The promotion of better understanding, between the English speaking peoples, through books." That says nothing about the war, or a temporary gap to be bridged: it represents a design for permanent structure. But for the war we might not have recognised the need; but the need will outlast the war; and once we have seen it, we must go on doing something about it. And this brings me to my third point: "Why so much attention to Children's books?" Well, this can be explained both as a wartime need and in terms of future policy. To begin with, there is much more curiosity, on each side of the water, about educational methods on the other side, than there has ever been before. A good deal of our work here has been for teachers, who have wanted information of all sorts about the school systems, and methods of teaching, in America. That is a side of the work about which I am not going to speak directly: but it is obvious that work for teachers and work for the children themselves are closely related. If the teachers are interested in the other country, they will interest their pupils too. But I think the children themselves are more interested than before. Many American children must have come to know English children, plunged suddenly among them, and no doubt discussed with them various problems of school administration such as rewards and punishments, and games.[3] Many English children have school friends, some of whom have returned from America, and no doubt discuss the same grave problems with them. So it is an advantageous moment for interesting British and American children in each other. Even if a British child is first interested by the rumour – alas, I believe no longer so well founded as it was – that America is a land where you can have unlimited chocolate ice creams and layer cake at any time of the day, that is a point from which you can make a start. And it is for this reason that we have encouraged the making and exchange of hand-made books between British and American schools, so that the children may learn, not just by being taught, but from each other. That brings me to my last point.

I have answered the question "Why children's books?" I want to answer the question "Why new children's books?" The amount of good that has been done by children's classics, between the two countries, is immeasurable. It is true that I have found it necessary to modify the speech of Uncle Remus, in reading to children in Scotland, and no doubt it would be necessary to apply a similar discretion in introducing the Wee McGregor to children in Missouri.[4] But those are extreme cases, and at least Uncle Remus is very beloved here. What is more important is that life on the Mississippi has changed a bit since the time of Tom Sawyer, and life at an English school has changed since the time of Tom Brown.[5] I hope that boys in both countries will continue to be familiar with both heroes. But children in each country ought to know something about how children in the other country live today. These early impressions are so important that it is important that they should be true impressions: for we are looking to the children of today, to be members of Books Across the Sea when they have children of their own.

NOTES

1. Carbon copies of the eight-page broadcast script are in the Manuscript and Archives section of the New York Public Library, and in the Houghton (bMS Am1691 [39]). TSE's contribution appears on pages 2-4.

2. On TSE's role in Books Across the Sea, see the headnote to his 1943 presidential message (6.418).

3. A number of British children evacuated from urban areas considered vulnerable to German attack were given asylum in the United States.

4. Wee Macgreegor, the eponymous hero of John Joy Bell's 1902 novel and its several sequels, speaks in a heavily marked Scots vernacular, as the freedman Uncle Remus in Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* (1880) and its sequels speaks in an extravagantly represented African American dialect.

5. Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) depicts boyhood in frontier America; Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857), boyhood at Rugby School.

What Is Minor Poetry?[1*]

I do not propose to offer, either at the beginning or at the end, a definition of "minor poetry." The danger of such a definition would be, that it might lead us to expect that we could settle, once for all, who are the "major" and who are the "minor" poets. Then, if we tried to make out two lists, one of major and one of minor poets in English literature, we should find that we agreed about a few poets for each list, that there would be more about whom we should differ, and that no two people would produce quite the same lists: and what then would be the use of our definition? What I think we can do, however, is to take notice of the fact that when we speak of a poet as "minor," we mean different things at different times; we can make our minds a little clearer about what these different meanings are, and so avoid confusion and misunderstanding. We shall certainly go on meaning several different things by the term, so we must, as with many other words, make the best of it, and not attempt to squeeze everything into one definition. What I am concerned to dispel is any derogatory association connected with the term "minor poetry," together with the suggestion that minor poetry is easier to read, or less worth while to read, than "major poetry." The question is simply, what kinds of minor poetry are there, and why should we read it?

The most direct approach, I think, is by considering the several kinds of anthologies of poetry: because one association of the term "minor poetry" makes it mean "the kind of poems that we only read in anthologies." And, incidentally, I am glad of an opportunity to say something about the uses of anthologies, because, if we understand their uses, we can also be guarded against their dangers – for there are poetry-lovers who can be called anthology-addicts, and cannot read poetry in any other way. Of course the primary value of anthologies, as of all poetry, lies in their being able to give pleasure: but, beyond this, they should serve several purposes.

One kind of anthology, which stands by itself, is that which consists of poems by young poets, those who have not yet published volumes, or whose books are not yet widely known. Such collections have a particular value for both poets and readers, whether they represent the work of one group of poets, with certain principles in common, or whether the only unity of the contents is that given by the fact that all the poets belong to the same literary generation. For the young poet, it is generally desirable to have several stages of publicity, before he arrives at the point of having a small book all to himself. First, the periodicals: not the well-known ones with a national circulation – the only advantage, to the young poet, of appearing in these, is the possible guinea (or guineas)[2†] that he may receive on publication – but the small magazines, devoted to contemporary verse, and edited by young editors. These small magazines often appear to circulate only among contributors and would-be contributors; their condition is usually precarious, they appear at irregular intervals, and their existence is brief, yet their collective importance is out of all proportion to the obscurity in which they struggle. Apart from the value they may have in giving experience to future literary editors – and good literary editors have an important part to play in a healthy literature – they give the poet the advantage of seeing his work in print, of comparing it with that of his equally obscure, or slightly better known contemporaries, and of receiving the attention and criticism of those who are most likely to be in sympathy with his style of writing. For a poet must make a place for himself among other poets, and within his own generation, before he appeals to either a larger or an older public. To those people who are interested in publishing poetry, these small magazines also provide a means of keeping an eye on the beginners, and watching their progress. Next, a small group of young writers, with certain affinities or regional sympathies between them, may produce a volume together. Such groups frequently bind themselves together by formulating a set of principles or rules, to which usually nobody adheres; in course of time the group disintegrates, the feebler members vanish, and the stronger ones develop more individual styles. But the group, and the group anthology, serve a useful purpose: young poets do not ordinarily get, and indeed are better without, much attention from the general public, but they need the support and criticism of each other, and of a few other people. And, last, there are the more comprehensive anthologies of new verse, preferably compiled by more detached young editors: these have the value of giving the poetry reader a notion of what is going on, a chance of studying the changes in subject-matter and style, without going through a great number of periodicals or separate volumes; and they serve to direct his further attention to the progress of a few poets who may seem to him of promise. But even these collections do not reach the general reader, who as a rule will not have heard of any of the poets until they have produced several volumes and consequently found inclusion in other anthologies covering a greater span of time. When he looks at one of these books, he is apt to judge it by standards which should not be applied: to judge promise as if it were mature performance, and to judge the anthology, not by the few best poems in it, but at best by the average.

The anthologies which have the widest circulation are of course those which, like the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, cover the whole of English literature up to the last generation; or those specializing in a particular period of the past; or those which cover the history of some part of poetry in English; or those which are limited to "modern" poetry of the last two or three generations, including such living poets as have established some reputation.[3] These last, of course, serve some of the purpose of the purely contemporary anthology as well. But, confining ourselves for convenience to those anthologies which include only the work of dead poets, let us ask what purposes they may be expected to serve their readers.

No doubt *The Golden Treasury*, or the *Oxford Book*, has given many people their introduction to Milton, to Wordsworth, or to Shelley (not to Shakespeare: but we don't expect to make our acquaintance with a dramatic poet through anthologies).[4] But I should not say that anyone who had read, and enjoyed, these poets, or half a dozen others, in an anthology, and yet had not the curiosity and appetite to tackle their complete works, and at least look to see what else they might like – I should not say that any such person was a real poetry lover. The value of anthologies in introducing us to the work of the greatest poets, is soon over; and we do not go on reading anthologies for the selections from these poets, though they have to be there. The anthology also helps us to find out, whether there are not some lesser poets of whose work we should like to know more – poets who do not figure so conspicuously in any history of literature, who may not have influenced the course of literature, poets whose work is not necessary for any abstract scheme of literary education, but who may have strong *personal* appeal to certain readers. Indeed, I should be inclined to doubt the genuineness of the love of poetry of any reader who did not have one or more of these personal affections for the work of some poet of no great historical importance: I should suspect that the person who only liked the poets whom the history books agree to be the most important, was probably no more than a conscientious student, bringing very little of himself to his appreciations. This poet may not be very important, you should say defiantly, but his work is good for *me*. It is largely a matter of chance, whether and how one makes the acquaintance of such poetry. In a family library there may be a book which somebody bought at the time it was published, because it was highly spoken of, and which nobody read. It was in this way that I came across, as a boy, a poem for which I have preserved a warm affection: *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold.[5] It is a long epic poem on the life of Gautama Buddha: I must have had a latent sympathy for the subject-matter, for I read it through with gusto, and more than once. I have never had the curiosity to find out anything about the author but to this day it seems to me a good poem, and when I meet anyone else who has read and liked it, I feel drawn to that person. Now you don't, as a rule, come across extracts from forgotten epics in anthologies: nevertheless it is always possible that in an anthology you will be struck by some piece by an obscure author, which leads to a close acquaintance with the work of some poet whom nobody else seems to enjoy, or to have read.

Just as the anthology can introduce us to poets who are not very important, but whose work is what one happens to like, so a good anthology can give us useful knowledge of other poets who are very important, but whom we don't like. There are only two reasons for reading the whole of *The Faery Queen* or of Wordsworth's *Prelude*.[6] One is that you enjoy reading it: and to enjoy either of the poems is a very good mark. But if you don't enjoy it, the only reason is that you are going to set up as a teacher of literature, or as a literary critic, and have *got* to know these poems. Yet Spenser and Wordsworth are both so important in the history of English literature because of all the other poetry which you understand better because of knowing them, that everybody ought to know something about them. There are not many anthologies which give substantial extracts from long poems – there is a very useful one, compiled by Charles Williams, who had the peculiar qualification of really enjoying all sorts of long poems which nobody else reads.[7] But even a good anthology composed of short pieces, can give one some knowledge, which is worth having, of those poets whom we do not enjoy. And just as everybody must have his personal tastes for some poetry which other people set no store by, so everybody, I suspect, has a blind spot towards the work of one or more poets who must be acknowledged to be great.

The next use of the anthology is one which can only be served if the compiler is not only very well read, but a man of very sensitive taste. There are many poets who have been generally dull, but who have occasional flashes. Most of us have not time to read through the works of competent and distinguished dull poets, specially [*sic*] those of another epoch, to find out the good bits for ourselves: and it would seldom be worth while even if we could afford the time. A century ago or more, every poetry lover devoured a new book by Tom Moore as soon as it came out: who to-day has read the whole even of *Lalla Rookh*?[8] Southey was Poet Laureate, and accordingly wrote epics: I do know one person who had *Thalaba*, if not *The Curse of Kehama*, read to her as a child, and retains something of the same affection for it that I have for *The Light of Asia*.[9] I wonder whether many people ever read *Gebir*; and yet Landor, the author of that dignified long poem, was a very able poet indeed.[10] There are many long poems, however, which seem to have been very readable when they first appeared, but which no one now reads – though I suspect that nowadays, when prose fiction supplies the need that was filled, for most readers, by the verse romances of Scott and Byron and Moore,[11] few people read a very long poem even when it is new from the press. So anthologies, and volumes of selections, are useful: because no one has time to read everything, and because there are poems only parts of which remain alive.

The anthology can have another use which, following the train of thought I have been pursuing, we might overlook. It lies in the interest of comparison, of being able to get, in a short space, a conspectus of the progress of poetry: and if there is much that we can only learn by reading one poet entire, there is much to learn by passing from one poet to another. To pass to and fro between a border ballad, an Elizabethan lyric, a lyric poem by Blake or Shelley, and a monologue by Browning, is to be able to get emotional experiences, as well as subjects for reflection, which concentration of attention on one poet cannot give. Just as in a well arranged dinner,[12†] what one enjoys is not a number of dishes by themselves but the combination of good things, so there are pleasures of poetry to be taken in the same way; and several very different poems, by authors of different temperaments and different ages, when read together, may each bring out the peculiar savour of each other, each having something that the others lack. To enjoy this pleasure we need a good anthology, and we need also some practice in the use of it.

I shall now return to the subject from which you may think that I have strayed. Though it is not only the minor poets who are represented in anthologies, we may think of the minor poets as those whom we only read in anthologies. I had to enter a *caveat* against this, in asserting that for every poetry reader there ought to be some minor poets whom it is worth while for *him* to read entire. But beyond this point we find more than one type of minor poet. There are of course poets who have written just one, or only a very few, good poems: so that there seems no reason for anybody going beyond the anthology. Such, for example, was Arthur O'Shaughnessy, whose poem beginning "We are the music makers" is in any anthology which includes late nineteenth-century verse.[13] Such, for some readers but not for all, will be Ernest Dowson, or John Davidson. But the number of poets of whom we can say that it holds true for all readers that they left only one or two particular poems worth reading, is actually very small: the chances are that if a poet has written one good poem, there will be something in the rest of his work which will be worth reading, for at least a few persons. Leaving these few out of account, we find that we often think of the minor poet as the poet who has only written short poems. But we may at times also speak of Southey, and Landor, and a host of writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as minor poets also, although they left poems of the most monumental size: and I think that nowadays few, at least among younger readers, would think of Donne as a minor poet, even if he had never written satires and epistles, or of Blake as a minor poet, even if he had never written his Prophetic Books. So we must count as minor poets, in one sense, some poets whose reputation, such as it is, rests upon very long poems; and as major poets, some who wrote only short ones.

It might seem at first simpler to refer to the minor writers of epics as *secondary*, or still more harshly as *failed great* poets. They have failed, certainly, in the sense that no one reads their long poems now: they are secondary, in the sense that we judge long poems according to very high standards. We don't feel that a long poem is worth the trouble unless it is, in its kind, as good as *The Faery Queen*, or *Paradise Lost*, or *The Prelude*, or *Don Juan*, or *Hyperion*, and the other long poems which are in the first rank.[14] Yet we have found that some of these secondary poems are worth reading, for some people. We notice further that we cannot simply divide long poems into a small number of masterpieces and a large number of those we needn't bother about. In between such poems as those I have just mentioned, and an estimable minor work like *The Light of Asia*, there are all sorts of long poems of different kinds and of every degree of importance, so that we cannot draw any definite line between the major and the minor. What about Thomson's *Seasons* and Cowper's *Task*?[15] – these are long poems which, if one's interest lies in other directions, one may be content to know only by extracts; but I would not admit that they are minor poems, or that any part, of either of them, is as good as the whole. What about Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, which I have never read, or that long poem by George Eliot of which I don't remember the name?[16]

If we have difficulty in separating the writers of long poems into major and minor poets, we have no easier decision with writers of short poems. One very interesting case is George Herbert. We all know a few of his poems, which appear again and again in anthologies; but when we read through his collected poems, we are surprised to find how many of the poems strike us as just as good as those we have met with in anthologies. But *The Temple* is something more than a number of religious poems by one author: it was, as the title is meant to imply, a book constructed according to a plan; and as we get to know Herbert's poems better, we come to find that there is something we get from the whole book, which is more than a sum of its parts.[17] What has at first the appearance of a succession of beautiful but separate lyrics, comes to reveal itself as a continued religious meditation with an intellectual framework; and the book as a whole discloses to us the Anglican devotional spirit of the first half of the seventeenth century. What is more, we get to understand Herbert better, and feel rewarded for the trouble, if we know something about the English theological writers of his time; if we know something about the English mystical writers of the fourteenth century; and if we know something of certain other poets, his contemporaries – Donne, Vaughan and Traherne – and come to perceive something in common between them in their Welsh origin and background;[18] and finally, we learn something about Herbert by comparing the typical Anglican devotion which he expresses, with the more continental, and Roman, religious feeling of his contemporary Richard Crashaw. So in the end, I, for one, cannot admit that Herbert can be called a "minor" poet: for it is not of a few favourite poems that I am reminded when I think of him, but of the whole work.

Now compare Herbert with two other poets, one a little senior to him, and one of the previous generation, but both very distinguished writers of lyrics. From the poems of Robert Herrick, also an Anglican parson, but a man of very different temperament, we also get the feeling of a unifying personality, and we get to know this personality better by reading all of his poems, and for having read all of his poems we enjoy still better the ones we like best. But first, there is no such continuous conscious *purpose* about Herrick's poems; he is more the purely natural and un-selfconscious man, writing his poems as the fancy seizes him; and second, the personality expressed in them is less unusual – in fact, it is its honest *ordinariness* which gives the charm. Relatively, we get much more of him from one poem than we do of Herbert from one poem: still, there is *something* more in the whole than in the parts. Next, consider Thomas Campion, the Elizabethan writer of songs. I should say that within his limits there was no more accomplished craftsman in the whole of English poetry than Campion. I admit that to understand his poems fully there are some things one should know: Campion was a musician, and he wrote his songs to be sung. We appreciate his poems better if we have some acquaintance with Tudor music and with the instruments for which it was written; we like them better if we like this music; and we want not merely to read them, but to hear some of them sung, and sung to Campion's own setting. But we do not so much need to know any of the things that, in the case of George Herbert, help us to understand him better and enjoy him more; we need not concern ourselves with what he thought, or with what books he had read, or with his racial background or his personality. All we need is the Elizabethan setting. What we get, when we proceed from those of his poems which we read in anthologies, to read his entire collection, is a repeated pleasure, the enjoyment of new beauties and new technical variations, but no such total impression. We cannot say, with him, that the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

I do not say that even this test – which, in any case, everyone must apply for himself, with various results – of whether the whole is more than the sum of its parts, is in itself a satisfactory criterion for distinguishing between a major and a minor poet. Nothing is so simple as that: and although we do not feel, after reading Campion, that we know the man Campion, as we do feel after reading Herrick, yet on other grounds, because he is so much the more remarkable craftsman, I should myself rate Campion as a more important poet than Herrick, though very much below Herbert. All I have affirmed is, that a work which consists of a number of short poems, even of poems which, taken individually, may appear rather slight, may, if it has a unity of underlying pattern, be the equivalent of a first-rate long poem in establishing an author's claim to be a "major" poet. That claim may, of course, be established by *one* long poem, and when that long poem is good enough, when it has within itself the proper unity and variety, we do not need to know, or if we know we do not need to value highly, the poet's other works. I should myself regard Samuel Johnson as a major poet by the single testimony of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and Goldsmith by the testimony of *The Deserted Village*.[19]

We seem, so far, to have arrived at the tentative conclusion that, whatever a minor poet may be, a major poet is one the whole of whose work we ought to read, in order fully to appreciate any part of it: but we have somewhat qualified this extreme assertion already by admitting any poet who has written even one long poem which combines enough variety in unity. But there are certainly very few poets in English of whose work one can say that the whole ought to be read. Shakespeare, certainly, and Milton: and as to Milton one can point out that his several long poems, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, not only should each be read entire, for its own sake – we need to read them all,[20] just as we need to read *all* of the plays of Shakespeare, in order fully to understand any one of them; and unless we read Shakespeare's sonnets as well, and the minor poems of Milton, there is something lacking to our appreciation of what we have read. But the poets for whom one can make such a claim are very few. One can get on very well in life without having read all the later poems of Browning or Swinburne; I would not affirm confidently that one ought to read everything by Dryden or Pope; and it is certainly not for *me* to say that there is no part of *The Prelude* or *The Excursion* which will not bear skipping.[21] Very few people want to give much time to the early long poems of Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam* and *Queen Mab*, though the notes to the latter poem are certainly worth reading.[22] So that we shall have to say that a major poet is one of whose work we have to read a great deal, but not always the whole. And besides asking the question, "Of which poets is it worth while to read the whole work?" we must also ask the question, "Of which poets is it worth *my* while to read the whole?" The first question implies that we should always be trying to improve our taste. The second implies that we must be sincere about what taste we have. So, on the one hand, it is no use diligently going through even Shakespeare or Milton from cover to cover, unless you come across something there which you like at once: it is only this immediate pleasure which can give you either the motive power to read the whole, or the prospect of any benefit when you have done so. And there may be, indeed, there should be – as I have already said – some poets who mean enough to *you* to make you read the whole of their work, though they may not have that value for most other people. And this kind of liking does not only pertain to a stage in your development of taste which you will outgrow, but may indicate also some affinity between yourself and a particular author which will last a lifetime: it may even be that you are peculiarly qualified to appreciate a poet whom very few other people are able to enjoy.

I should say then that there is a kind of orthodoxy about the relative greatness and importance of our poets, though there are very few reputations which remain completely constant from one generation to another. No poetic reputation ever remains exactly in the same place: it is a stock market in constant fluctuation. There are the very great names which only fluctuate, so to speak, within a narrow range of points: whether Milton is up to 104 to-day, and down to 97¼ to-morrow, does not matter. There are other reputations like that of Donne, or Tennyson, which vary much more widely, so that one has to judge their value by an average taken over a long time; there are others again which are very steady a long way below par, and remain good investments at that price. And there are some poets who are good investments for *some* people, though no prices are quoted for them on the market, and the stock may be unsaleable – I am afraid that the comparison with the stock exchange rather fades out at this point. But I should say that although there is an objective ideal of orthodox taste in poetry, no one reader can be, or should try to be, quite orthodox. There are certainly some poets, whom so many generations of people of intelligence, sensibility and wide reading have liked,[23†] that (if we like any poetry) it is worth our while to try to find out why these people have liked them, and whether we cannot enjoy them too. Of the smaller poets, there are certainly some about whom, after sampling, we can pretty safely take the usual opinion that they are quite adequately represented by two or three poems: for, as I have said, nobody has time to find out everything for himself, and we must accept some things on the assurance of others.

The majority of smaller poets, however – of those who preserve any reputation at all – are poets of whom every reader of poetry should know something, but only a few of whom any one reader will come to know well. Some appeal to us because of a peculiar congeniality of personality; some because of their subject-matter, some because of a particular quality, of wit or pathos for example. When we talk about Poetry, with a capital P, we are apt to think only of the more intense emotion or the more magical phrase: nevertheless there are a great many casements in poetry which are not magic, and which do not open on the foam of perilous seas, but are perfectly good windows for all that. I think that George Crabbe was a very good poet, but you do not go to him for magic: if you like realistic accounts of village life in Suffolk a hundred and twenty years ago, in verse so well written that it convinces you that the same thing could not be said in prose, you will like Crabbe. Crabbe is a poet who has to be read in large chunks, if at all; so if you find him dull you must just glance and pass by. But it is worth while to know of his existence, in case he might be to your liking, and also because that will tell you something about the people who do like him.

The chief points which I have so far tried to make are, I think, these: The difference between major and minor poets has nothing to do with whether they wrote long poems, or only short poems – though the *very* greatest poets, who are few in number, have all had something to say which could only be said in a long poem. The important difference is whether a knowledge of the whole, or at least of a very large part, of a poet's work, makes one enjoy more, because it makes one understand better, any one of his poems. That implies a significant unity in his whole work. One can't put this increased understanding altogether into words: I could not say just why I think I understand and enjoy *Comus* better for having read *Paradise Lost*, or *Paradise Lost* better for having read *Samson Agonistes*, but I am convinced that this is so.[24] I cannot always say why, through knowing a person in a number of different situations, and observing his behaviour in a variety of circumstances, I feel that I understand better his behaviour or demeanour on a particular occasion: but we do believe that that person is a unity, however inconsistent his conduct, and that acquaintance with him over a span of time makes him more intelligible. Finally, I have qualified this objective discrimination between major and minor poets by referring it back to the particular reader. For no two readers, perhaps, will any great poet have quite the same significance, however in accord they may be as to his eminence: all the more likely, then, that to no two people will the pattern of English poetry be quite the same. So that of two equally competent readers, a particular poet may be to one of major importance and to the other of minor.

There is a final reflection to be made, when we come to consider contemporary poetry. We sometimes find critics confidently asserting, on their first acquaintance with the work of a new poet, that this is "major" or "minor" poetry. Ignoring the possibility that what the critic is praising or placing may not be poetry at all (for sometimes one can say, "*If* this was poetry, it would be major poetry – but it isn't") I don't think it is advisable to make up one's mind so quickly. The most that I should venture to commit myself to, about the work of any living poet when I met it for the first time, is whether this is *genuine* poetry or not. Has this poet something to say, a little different from what anyone has said before, and has he found, not only a different way of saying it, but *the* different way of saying it which expresses the difference in what he is saying? Even when I commit myself thus far, I know that I may be taking a speculative risk. I may be impressed by what he is *trying* to say, and overlook the fact that he hasn't found the new way of saying it; or the new idiom of speech which at first gives the impression that the author has something of his own to say, may turn out to be only a trick or mannerism which conceals a wholly conventional vision. For anyone who reads, like myself, a good many manuscripts and manuscripts of writers no work by whom he may have seen before, the pitfalls are more dangerous still: for one lot of poems may be so much better than any of the others I have just been looking at, that I may mistake my momentary feeling of relief for an awareness of distinguished talent. Many people content themselves either with looking at anthologies – and even when they are struck by a poem, they may not realize the fact, or if they do, they may not notice the name of the author – or with waiting until it becomes apparent that some poet, after producing several volumes (and that in itself is some assurance) has been accepted by the reviewers (and it is not what reviewers say in writing about a poet, but their references to that poet when writing about some other poet, that impress us most).

The first method does not get us very far; the second is not very safe. For one thing, we are all apt to be somewhat on the defensive about our own epoch. We like to feel that our own epoch can produce great art – all the more so because we may have a lurking suspicion that it can't: and we feel somehow that if we could believe that we had a great poet, that would in some way reassure us and give us self-confidence. This is a pathetic wish, but it also disturbs critical judgment, for we may jump to the conclusion that somebody is a great poet who is not; or we may quite unfairly depreciate a good poet because he isn't a great one. And with our contemporaries, we oughtn't to be so busy enquiring whether they are great or not; we ought to stick to the question: "Are they *genuine*?" and leave the question whether they are great to the only tribunal which can decide: *time*.

In our own time there is, in fact, a considerable public for contemporary poetry: there is, perhaps, more curiosity, and more expectation, about contemporary poetry than there was a generation ago. There is the danger, on the one hand, of developing a reading public which will know nothing about any poet earlier than say Gerard Manley Hopkins, and which will not have the background necessary for critical appreciation. There is also the danger that people will wait to read a poet until his contemporary reputation is established; and the anxiety, for those of us who are in the business, that after another generation has established its poets, we who are still contemporary will no longer be read. The danger for the reader is double: that he will never get anything *quite* fresh, and that he will never return to read what always remains fresh.

There is therefore a proportion to be observed between our reading of old and modern poetry. I should not trust the taste of anyone who never read any contemporary poetry, and I should certainly not trust the taste of anyone who read nothing else. But even many people who read contemporary poetry miss the pleasure, and the profit, of finding something out for themselves. When you read *new* poetry, poetry by someone whose name is not yet widely known, someone whom the reviewers have not yet passed, you are exercising, or should be exercising, your *own* taste. There is nothing else to go by. The problem is not, as it appears to many readers, that of trying to like something you don't, but of leaving your sensibility free to react naturally. I find this hard enough, myself: for when you are reading a new poet with the deliberate purpose of coming to a decision, that purpose may interfere and obscure your awareness of what you feel. It is hard to ask the two questions, "Is it good, whether I like it or not?" and "Do I like this?" at the same time: and I often find that the best test is when some phrase, or image, or line out of a new poem, recurs to my mind unsummoned. I find, too, that it is useful for me to look at the new poems in the poetry magazines, and at the selections from new poets in the contemporary anthologies: because in reading these I am not bothered by the question, "Ought I to see that these poems are published?" I think it is similar to my experience, that when I go to hear a new piece of music for the first time, or to see a new exhibition of pictures, I prefer to go alone. For if I am alone, there is nobody to whom I am obliged to express an immediate opinion. It isn't that I need time to make up my mind: I need time in order to know what I really felt at the moment. And that feeling is not a judgment of greatness or importance: it is an awareness of *genuineness*. So, we are not really concerned, in reading a contemporary poet, with whether he is a "major" or a "minor" poet. But if we read one poem, and respond to it, we should want to read more by the same author; and when we have read enough, we ought to be able to answer the question, "Is this merely more of the same thing?" – is it, in other words, merely the same, or different, without adding up to anything, or is there a relation between the poems which makes us see a little more in each of them? That is why, with the same reservation as about the work of dead poets, we must read not only separate poems, as we get them in anthologies, but the work of a poet.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "An address delivered before the Association of Bookmen of Swansea and West Wales at Swansea in September 1944. Subsequently published in *The Sewanee Review*."

The text of the address was originally published in *Welsh Review*, 3 (Dec 1944), 256-67, where TSE's note specifies the date of the lecture as 26 Sept, his fifty-sixth birthday. It was reprinted in *Sewanee Review*, 54 (Jan-Mar 1946), 1-18. The version in *OPP*, revised from the *Sewanee* reprint, is given here. Significant revisions are recorded in the textual notes.

2†. The parenthetical "or guineas" was first inserted in *OPP*.

3. Over the first forty years of the twentieth century, *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900*, ed. Arthur T. Quiller-Couch (1900), sold almost a half-million copies and ran through twenty-one impressions.

4. *The Golden Treasury of Songs & Lyrics in the English Language* (1861), ed. Francis Turner Palgrave.

5. *The Light of Asia; or, The Great Renunciation* (London: Trubner, 1879), by Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904), English journalist and poet. Arnold's preface describes the book as seeking, "by the medium of an imaginary Buddhist votary, to depict the life and character and indicate the philosophy of that noble hero and reformer, Prince Gautama of India, the founder of Buddhism" (ix).

6. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96); Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1850).

7. Charles Walter Stansby Williams (1886-1945), English writer, theologian, and literary critic. TSE probably has in mind his anthology *The New Book of English Verse* (London: Gollancz, 1935), published, as the earlier versions of the present essay have it, "a few years ago." However, Williams's *Book of Victorian Narrative Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927) also contains "substantial extracts from long poems."

8. Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1817).

9. *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), epic poems by Robert Southey.

10. Walter Savage Landor, *Gebir* (1898).

11. Most of Sir Walter Scott's long narrative poems, such as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), predate his novels. As TSE suggests, these works, like Moore's *Lalla Rookh* and Byron's verse romances – from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18) and the four *Oriental Tales* (1813-14) to *Mazeppa* (1819) – were popular in their time.

12†. In *Welsh* and *Sewanee*: "dinner (if I may be pardoned for reminding you of such pleasures nowadays)"

13. Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844-81), British poet. The reference is to his "Ode," from *Music and Moonlight: Poems and Songs* (1874).

14. Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667); Byron, *Don Juan* (1819-24); Keats, *Hyperion* (1820).

15. *The Seasons* (1730), by the Scottish poet and playwright James Thomson (1700-48); *The Task* (1785), by William Cowper.

16. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (1856); and George Eliot, *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), a long dramatic poem that – unlike *Aurora Leigh* – was neither a popular nor a critical success.

17. George Herbert, *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633). The title was apparently supplied by Nicholas Ferrar, to whom the dying Herbert sent the manuscript, and who saw it through publication.

18. Like Herbert, Vaughan was Welsh by birth; Donne, though English, had Welsh ancestors; Traherne was born and raised in Hereford, not far from the Welsh border.

19. Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes: The Tenth Satire of Juvenal Imitated* (1749); Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village* (1770).

20. *Paradise Regained* (1671); *Samson Agonistes: A Dramatic Poem* (1671).

21. *The Excursion* (1814), a dramatic verse narrative by Wordsworth.

22. *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) and *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem* (1813). TSE saw in Shelley's notes to *Queen Mab* – as he told Tom Greenwell of the *Yorkshire Post* in a 1961 interview – a predecessor to his own notes to *The Waste Land*. Earlier, in *UPUC*, he wrote of Shelley, "The notes to *Queen Mab* express, it is true, only the views of an intelligent and enthusiastic schoolboy, but a schoolboy who knows how to write; and throughout his work, which is of no small bulk for a short life, he does not, I think, let us forget that he took his ideas seriously" (4.642).

23†. In *Welsh* and *Sewanee*: "so many people of intelligence, sensibility and wide reading have liked for a long time,"

24. Milton, *Comus* (1637).

Preface to *Roll Call* [*Apel*, by Jerzy Andrzejewski]

TSE wrote this preface to an anonymous text on the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz (in Polish: Oświęcim) in Dec 1944. On 2 Nov, he received a preliminary inquiry from Douglas Woodruff, editor of the Roman Catholic review *The Tablet*, on behalf the Polish Research Centre in London. "You may think you are rather an unexpected choice," wrote Woodruff, "but they have made up their minds that you are the person they would soonest have, as a Christian and a man of letters, sharing their general point of view, without being a co-religionist." The directors of the Polish Research Centre, Count Jan Balinski-Jundzill (1899-1974) and Professor Adam Żółtowski (1882-1958), were active Roman Catholics.

When TSE answered receptively, Żółtowski, who worked closely with the Polish Government in Exile in London, asked him on 16 Nov for "a preface to the ghastly record which I enclose. . . . I hope you will share my view that these memories of a prisoner in the Oswiecim concentration camp are something more than the general run of atrocity reports." In response to TSE's further inquiries, Żółtowski assured him on 12 Dec that the text "most authentically" came "from Poland by the usual [secret] channels"; the name of the author could not be revealed since "human lives depend[ed] upon it being kept as secret as possible." TSE agreed to write the preface. He sent it to Żółtowski on 21 Dec and refused to accept any payment. In a letter of 7 Mar 1945, he explained: "[I] should be very much happier to feel that I had given my work for the sake of your nation."

The anonymous narrative, titled *Apel* [*Roll Call*], was in fact authored by the Polish writer Jerzy Andrzejewski (1909-83).[1] The text describes a punitive action taken at Auschwitz when one of the prisoners, an elderly schoolmaster, was found missing. All the prisoners were forced to stand "at attention" for fifteen hours in the cold autumn weather, wearing very thin clothing. They were beaten and tortured by SS-men; many were killed or died of ill health and exhaustion. The roll call was stopped only when the missing inmate was found dead in the cellar of the house where he worked during the day.[2]

***Roll Call*, it should be noted, highlights Polish rather than Jewish suffering; the incident it recounts took place before the mass extermination of Jews in Auschwitz began. Prior to 1942, the camp held mainly Polish political prisoners, with as many as 150,000 of these interned there during the war, together with religious, ethnic, and other minorities.**

As Żółtowski informed TSE on 14 Mar, the English translation with TSE's preface was to be published by the London-based Polish literary magazine *Nowa Polska* [New Poland]. Ultimately, however, the text was instead published in Polish by the London-based publisher Światpol in 1945 with a foreword by the historian Andrzej Pomian (1911-2008). It is unclear why the plan to publish *Roll Call* in English was abandoned.

In his last reference to the book, a letter to Żółtowski dated 16 Mar, TSE was still hoping that it would find "a wide public."

While a five-page carbon copy of TSE's unpublished preface has survived in the Eliot estate archive, the English translation of *Roll Call* that he prefaced never appeared in print and is probably no longer extant.

This book records a single incident, occupying only a few hours in the life of the notorious concentration camp of Oswiecim in Poland. Whoever the unknown author may be, or may have been, he was, as appears even through a translation, a man who knew how to write. I put this opinion first: for the fact that the document commends itself as a piece of writing, must be the first justification of the editors, for inviting a writer, with no experience of concentration camps, to introduce it. Whoever wrote this book knew how to exercise selection; to practise restraint and economy; to observe those details of a scene which, while intellectually irrelevant, are emotionally significant; and to apprehend the visible event and its setting, not primarily in relation to an idea to be communicated, but in relation to the private and solitary torment of the prisoners concerned. He describes an incident of ordinary routine "discipline." He makes us feel the degree to which suffering isolates men each in his private hell: yet his sympathy and compassion unite the characters in a communion of misery. The compassion almost extends to the torturers themselves: they too, like the prisoners, are isolated from each other, and yet torturers and tortured all exist in one hell together. In short, the author writes with detachment: not the detachment of those who feel less, but that of those who are aware of more, than the majority of men; a detachment as of the dead and disembodied spirit, who has passed through suffering to the edge of serenity. In so doing, he enables us to experience the abomination, as the most lurid account in the daily press cannot do.

There is a peculiar suitability in publishing such a document at the present moment. There are concentration camps still on Polish soil, as there are in Germany itself. But these, we presume, will be brought to an end: and they seem so near coming to an end that we may be inclined to turn our minds away from the thought of them, to vexing problems with more recent claim on our attention. It is not so much as reminder of what is still going on that we need this story now: it is rather as a reminder of the past and as an admonition for the future.

When we think of horrors in the course of their enaction, our pity goes out to the immediate individual sufferers, and our condemnation to the immediate individual slave-masters and torturers. When we look back upon them as past, we incline to equate the sufferings of one people with those of another. For all the sufferings of individual Poles, there are, we know, sufferings of individuals of every other nation within the area of war – and of Germany too. So we might feel that it was unfair to sympathise more warmly with the miseries of one people than with those of another; we may be impatient to cancel the whole wretched ledger account, and start a new page. Yet, while we must try to be just in according equal sympathy to those whose suffering – so far as suffering can ever be equated – is equal, it is right to say still that Poland is the greatest sufferer among the nations.[3] And by this I do not mean the suffering of a personified abstraction: I mean that Poland suffers, to an extent to which no other nation does, in the consciousness of every conscious Pole. The wound is deeper, the convalescence will be longer and of more doubtful issue. Some, at least, among other peoples, may experience some distraction from the terror and humiliation they have endured, by plunging into civil wars, or turning an old friend into a new foe. But for Poland there can be no such relief. Each grievance of Poland is only a detail in a pattern of sorrow which extends coherently into the past and the future. So a record of a prison camp such as that here presented, is important not primarily as fresh evidence of German barbarism: for such evidence is offered by every country which Germany has overrun. The meaning of the record is in its evidence of the suffering of Poland, in relation to the whole history of that unhappy country.

This record has another significance, too, in relation to the future – not the future of Poland alone, but the future of the whole of Europe and of European civilisation.

When we read of exceptional crimes, we tend to attribute them to people of exceptional mentality, or to people in an exceptional state of mind which can be dispelled and which need not recur. That is the easiest view to take: and, during a war, it is even to some degree the necessary view, for we can take arms against a system only in so far as it is incarnate in a particular enemy. But, the closer we make this identification, the more we are exposed to the danger of not recognising the system when it appears in another place and under another name. When a concentration camp confines our friends, we see it truly as an evil thing: if it confined our enemies, we might, I fear, regard it is as a lamentable necessity. If the keepers of the camp were of our own party, we should not hear so much of the abuses, and we should be more ready to discount what we heard. And, as concentration camps would certainly be called by some other name – "colonies of protective custody," perhaps, or "reconditioning centres" – we should be convinced that we had to do with something quite different: for we are persistently prone, and no less in our present generation, to deceive ourselves with names. The process of deception is somewhat as follows. We all profess devotion to "democracy." But democracy has to mean our own notion of democracy. Everything that fails to conform to our notion of democracy is not only evil, but all the same kind of evil, which is "fascism." Whatever we do, therefore, is certain to illustrate democracy; and if anyone is so ill-advised as to declare that some measure we have taken violates the principles of democracy, it is *his* notion of democracy that is mistaken, retrograde, and covertly reactionary. We tend to define democracy in principle as whatever we happen to believe, and democracy in action as anything that we chose to do.

We need therefore to distinguish between the essence and the attributes of the concentration camp. We should see it as essentially the same evil, whether the conduct of it is more, or less humane. The wickedness of a few men in power may be what has instituted the concentration camp; but however the concentration camp comes about, it inevitably brutalises those who keep it and those who countenance it. The evil lies in treating any group of human beings, whether foreign foes or domestic factionaries, whether a nation or a class, as something less than human, as merely pawns or pests: this is an attitude which gradually takes control of those who entertain it, which gradually brutalises those who are tempted by it. Yet it is a temptation to which every impatient reformer is exposed. These people who refuse to fit into a plan when it is agreed that we must have a plan, and the more comprehensive the better: and the more comprehensive the plan, the greater number there will be of inconvenient pieces which will not fit, which must be remoulded or got rid of. I could forget Oswiecim concentration camp, if it took no place in any possible shape of things to come. But only if we keep in mind its terrible *congruity* to the modern world, its aptness as an instrument for the demonic forces which are prowling about like influenza or the plague, only then will the Poles at Oswiecim have died to some appreciable purpose.[4]

NOTES

1. During World War II, Andrzejewski lived in occupied Warsaw, where he took an active part in the underground resistance movement and wrote the "wartime stories" that would be published in *Noc* [Night] (1945). *Roll Call*, which he completed in Dec 1942, was included in *Noc*.

2. The text is based on a real-life event, later identified by Władysław Bartoszewski (1922-2015), an Auschwitz survivor, as the penal roll call of 28 Oct 1940, one of the longest in the history of the camp. (In *Roll Call*, Andrzejewski dates the incident to Oct 1941; whether this was a deliberate decision or an inadvertent error is unknown.) Bartoszewki writes in his memoir, published as *Mój Auschwitz* [My Auschwitz] (Kraków: Znak, 2010): "We still do not know who told the story to Andrzejewski, since he was never an Auschwitz prisoner himself. He could have been familiar with underground brochures and talked to ex-prisoners. One thing is certain, and I find it surprising even today: Andrzejewski described that roll call as if he looked at it with my own eyes. Initially I was sure that it was written by a person who witnessed the event, took part in it. No one else could have described that roll call in so much detail! But the author is Andrzejewski, who was not imprisoned for a single day, never found himself forced into an act of physical submission, and did not even know what a drill was, as he never did any military service. But, as we know, he was a man of exceptional literary talent" (39-40). *Trans*: Joanna Rzepa.

3. In Sept 1939, following its partition by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Poland was invaded and annexed by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Polish state was dissolved, and both occupiers subjected the populace to programmatic repression and mass executions. The Germans overran Soviet-occupied Poland in 1941; the counterattacking Soviets would retake the country in 1944-45. Altogether, Poland experienced approximately six-million deaths (half of these among its Jewish population), the calculated demolition of its social and cultural institutions, and widespread destruction of its physical infrastructure. On Soviet misconduct in particular, see TSE's preface to *The Dark Side of the Moon* (6.742).

4. A new English translation of *Roll Call* was published in July 1960, when it appeared in the Warsaw-based *Poland Illustrated Magazine*, 71 (1960), 13-28, with a preface by the Polish writer Jacek Bocheński (1926-). The text was never published with TSE's preface.

The *Four Quartets*

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 26 (25 Jan 1945) 112

Sir, – In his review of my *Four Quartets* in *The New English Weekly* several weeks ago, Mr. Snell mentioned my note of acknowledgement to friends for their help, and observed that he could only find three or four minor changes from the text as originally printed in your columns.[1] He is quite correct, and correct also in suggesting that one of the changes was of doubtful value. But the "improvements of word and phrase" for which I made acknowledgement were incorporated before the poems were printed in any form, and therefore remain invisible.

There is, however, one error in the text which has escaped the observation of any of my friends or critics, and of which I have only just myself become aware. In the first section of *The Dry Salvages*, "hermit crab" should be "horse-shoe crab."[2] It was, of course, the horse-shoe crab that I had in mind: the slip must have been due to the fact that I did not want a spondee in that place. What is more curious is that the term "hermit crab" should have continued to do duty for "horse-shoe crab" in my mind, in this context, from the date of original publication of the poem until last week. I shall be grateful to any of your readers who may possess the poem, if they will kindly make the alteration.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Reginald Snell, "T. S. Eliot and the English Poetic Tradition," *NEW*, 26 (14 Dec 1944), 77-78. Though Snell praised *Four Quartets* as "the wholly mature work of a most distinguished craftsman," he was puzzled by TSE's note in the poem's first book publication: "I wish to acknowledge my obligation to friends for their criticism, and particularly to Mr. John Hayward for improvements of phrase and construction." Snell observed that "the only significant alteration from the pamphlet form of the poems, apart from the substitution of 'and' for 'or' in one place, and a semi-colon for a full stop in another, is the appearance of the word 'appeasing' instead of 'reconciling,' in connection with 'forgotten wars' – a risky change, considering the emotional overtones to which the newer word now gives rise" (77).

East Coker was first published in the *NEW* on 21 Mar 1940, *The Dry Salvages* on 27 Feb 1941, and *Little Gidding* on 15 Oct 1942. Each poem was subsequently issued in the same year by Faber & Faber in pamphlet form; Faber also published *Burnt Norton* in pamphlet form (rpt. from *Collected Poems, 1909-1935*) in Feb 1941. The poems were first printed together as *Four Quartets* in the United States by Harcourt, Brace in May 1943, and in the UK by Faber in Oct 1944.

Snell (1904-91), an educator and author, taught at St. Christopher School, Letchworth, from 1932 to 1979, translated Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* (1945), and published several books and pamphlets with the Hogarth Press under the pseudonym "L. B. Pekin." A progressive educator, he advocated systemic reform, sex education, and co-education.

2. As first printed, line 19 of *The Dry Salvages* read, "The starfish, the hermit crab, the whale's backbone." TSE's further discussions of the error are recorded in *Poems1*, 966-67; the correction to "horseshoe crab" was first made in the (UK) third impression of *Four Quartets* in Aug 1945 (*Poems2*, 504). Some American editions, notably Harcourt's *Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*, have retained "hermit crab."

Broadcast on the publication of first ten "Guild Books" in Sweden

Abetting the British Council's efforts in cultural outreach, the British Publishers Guild – a consortium of firms including Faber & Faber – in early 1945 republished a series of contemporary novels in Sweden under its "Guild Books" imprint. The ten volumes brought out in early 1945 included works by Somerset Maugham, Compton Mackenzie, and Angela Thirkell, as well as a reprint of E. M. Forster's first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905).

Halvor William-Olsson of the BBC's Swedish service wrote TSE on 6 Feb 1945 requesting a short broadcast to be heard particularly at a reception for the Guild Books at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm. The writers and dignitaries there, Olsson wrote, "would all be very delighted if – be it only through the radio – you could so to speak join them and say a few words, giving your views on the Guild Book Series, or on some of the books to be published, or on the value that you attach to the cultural exchange between nations."

TSE completed his remarks the following Sunday, 11 Feb, and posted them to Olsson. The next day he told John Hayward that he had given over his weekend "to a broadcast (which I shall record) to Sweden to celebrate the appearance of the first 10 Guild Books (with the exception of an old story of Forster's . . . all commonplace novels by [A. G.] Street, Naomi Jacob etc.) published . . . in English: my little speech to be switched on directly Victor Mallet has stopped talking in the Grand Hotel." The British Envoy Sir Victor Mallet and his wife Peggy had befriended TSE on his 1942 visit.

TSE's broadcast took place on 16 Feb 1945. The five-page broadcast script, with related correspondence, is in the BBC Written Archives, Caversham; a carbon copy of the script, with TSE's holograph emendations, is in the Houghton (bMS Am 1691 [41]).

First, I wish to take this opportunity to give my greetings to my friends in Sweden, and to anyone who may remember me there. I have not forgotten the hospitality and kindness which I received from you, nearly three years ago.[1] I wish that I could be present, at the reception in Stockholm in connection with which, and to which, I am speaking: but, if I could have been flown to Stockholm for this occasion, I know that I should have wanted to stay longer than there was any excuse for.

We are celebrating the publication of the first ten English books, in what I hope will be a long and successful series, published in English by a Swedish publishing house in Stockholm.[2] I shall try to tell you why I think this is an event of some importance. But first I should like to explain, that I am myself, what is not so very unusual, both an author and a publisher. Now, authors and their publishers, like other people doing business together, do not always see eye to eye; and I am sometimes asked by other writers, which point of view, that of author or publisher, I really sympathise with most. I have never given this secret away, and I am not going to do so now: if I ever write an essay on the subject, it will not be made public until fifty years after my death. But on this occasion, I have no difficulty. The publication of this series of books in Sweden will give equal satisfaction to English authors and English publishers. With our limited supply of paper, and the great demand for books at home and for the fighting forces in Europe and over seas, our publishers could at present do little to supply foreign markets. People in other countries, seeing no English books for sale in their shops, may sometimes have come to the conclusion that books were no longer being written in England; or, that if they were written, they could not get published. They may think, either that we have no brains and energy available for literature, or that our public has become indifferent to books, or that our publishers lack the material means to produce them. Yet the number of books published in England, in the last five years, has been very large. It is only that we have not been able to print enough copies of each; and, even could we print more, the means of transportation would be lacking. So we have strong reason for being glad that some of our contemporary literature should also be published in English here. For our publishers, there is the hope that you will form an interest in the future work of the same authors, and in the work of other authors still unknown to you. For our authors, it is a satisfaction to know that their work can now become known in Sweden, and from Sweden reach other countries of Europe.

It is not my business to tell you about the particular ten novels with which the series of Guild books begins. It is enough to say that each publisher concerned chose a list from among what he considered his best and most successful, that a selection from these lists was made by a committee in London, and that the final choice was made by the publishers in Stockholm. As anyone conversant with the names of contemporary English novelists would expect, these are books which the English reading public has liked, and which your publishers believe that you will like. I will say nothing more in commendation of the books than that. I have been glad of the opportunity to speak of the pleasure of English publishers and English writers in having these books published here; it is not for me to tell you that you ought to enjoy them. I hope that you will. Certainly, if I wanted to find out about the culture of another people, whose language I could read, and from whom I had been cut off for five years, I should turn first to their novels. For novels reveal more than they state. Novels don't tell a foreign reader what the author wants him to think about the life of his country, they display that life; and they may disclose things of which the author himself was unconscious. Yet I hope that later some other kinds of book may be represented, for I believe that in other fields of writing, in science and in social thinking, we have made some important contributions during the last five years. I shall say nothing of our poetry: I talked of that when I was here.[3]

So far, I have spoken only of publishers, authors, and readers. If I left it at that, I should not give you an impression of the importance which I think this event has. It would still seem very unimportant, measured against the background of the great problems of European civilisation to-day, and the anxieties about that civilisation with which we all face the future. But it is in relation to that future that I see this event. The future of our civilisation depends, surely, upon the un-official and un-political relations which we can establish between the countries of Europe. The best that governments can do – and that is in itself a stupendous task – is to remove the obstacles to such intimacy. That concerns both the relation of each government to its country, and the relations of the governments between themselves.

The idea of Europe is a unity of different but related cultures – that is, if Europe is to be anything more than a geographical area. This unity cannot consist simply in treaties, and agreements, and alliances and leagues; and it cannot be imposed by force. For this unity the direct relation of people to people is needed. Not simply a relation of peoples as represented by their governments, or by the directors of various organised groups, but a relation between individual and individual, and between those groupings of individuals in natural association, according to family, profession, interests and temperament, which form the true anatomy of civilisation. We know that a people, when it is overrun by another, may in losing its independence lose its culture, that is, its own proper and cherished way of life. We are beginning to realise also, that even a people which fights successfully for its independence, may, if the conflict goes on long enough, suffer grave damage to its way of life, its culture. It is not merely that the normal pattern of existence, for every individual, is temporarily broken. It is not merely the indefinite postponement of ordinary living. It is not merely that the characteristic pursuits of a civilised people are restricted or suspended. It is that the culture of each people suffers, simply by being cut off from that of countries of kindred culture. And in a war like this one, neutrals suffer as much from this isolation as anyone else, though they may suffer less from the internal disorders of culture.[4] We all want freedom from outside interference; but, if we are an adult people, we do not want to be insulated from outside influence. Therefore, the circulation of reciprocal influence throughout Europe needs to be restored. We want to know about other countries: not simply what our government may want us to know, or what a foreign government may want us to know about its people. We want to form our own impressions. Therefore, we need to restore the circulation of books. Books in every language, for those who can read them, and books in translation for those who can not. Not books written with an eye to the foreign reader, but the books that are read in their own country. Books that will tell us how other people live, how they feel, how they think and what they are thinking about. I say this because I want to put the publication of this series of English books in Stockholm – a city which has now the position of a kind of cultural *entrepôt* for Europe – in what seems to me its proper setting.[5] I want to put it in relation to that general circulation of books throughout Europe which is needed. And I wish to put this general circulation of books – a circulation without political censorship – also in its proper setting: the ideal unity of European culture, a unity in which each nation has its distinct and independent place and function.

NOTES

1. TSE had toured Sweden under the auspices of the British Council from late Apr through 24 May 1942.

2. The Guild collaborated with the Swedish publisher Ljus to produce the series.

3. Probably a reference to "Poetry, Speech and Music" (6.272), the lecture on "modern English poetry" TSE delivered during his 1942 tour of Sweden.

4. Sweden was officially neutral throughout the war.

5. *Entrepôt* (OED): "A commercial centre; a place to which goods are brought for distribution to various parts of the world." In French, literally, "warehouse."

The Germanization of England

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 26 (8 Mar 1945) 167-68

Sir, – Mr. Snell has called attention to some of the weaknesses in Mr. Belgion's position, and some of the incoherence in his exposition of it.[1] By now Mr. Belgion may have supplied an answer, and perhaps explained what he really means. But I do not think that a mere rejoinder to his critics will be enough: he must pursue the enquiry further.

To distinguish the German mind by an element, "the Fanciful" (apparently not possessed by other peoples), is only to give an arbitrary name to the unknown; and to complicate "the Fanciful" with something else, also undefined and undistinguished from it, called "the Extravagant," only makes matters worse. I hope Mr. Belgion will proceed to consider (1) which German writers exhibit these vices most clearly, and which are relatively free from them, (2) what other differences are observable between members of the two groups, (3) what difference is observable between the influence of German ideas in Britain and their influence elsewhere, e.g., France, (4) which British writers have been most contaminated by German influence, and why.

The mere attribution of national or racial characteristics does not clarify: Germany has been a single nation only in very recent times, and is racially pretty mixed. I think that there is something else, antipathetic to Mr. Belgion, for which German philosophy and literature are merely his symbol. I think that a more satisfactory symbol or sign (for a complete explanation would never be reached) would be *Protestantism*, and specifically *Lutheran* Protestantism. If we chose to go back further, we might discern simply a tendency to heresy. When I speak of these terms, I wish to make it clear that I am not directly concerned with religious beliefs, or with the profession of faith of Mr. Belgion or anyone else: I am speaking from a cultural or a sociological point of view.[2] This restatement of the issue will not, I am sure, satisfy Mr. Read: who will hasten to add, to his other irrelevancies, the argument that Dr. Mannheim and some other philosophers are not Lutherans.[3] I think that Mr. Read himself is, in the cultural sense, a

Protestant, and Mr. Belgion, in the same sense, a Catholic.[4] This might account for the quiver of passion which seems to me to make Mr. Read's aim rather wild. I should like to see Mr. Read and Mr. Belgion shoot it out on this different ground.

What Mr. Belgion dislikes is not any infection from which some sort of quarantine would protect us: if it is a disease, it is, I fear, already endemic, in England and Scotland.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In "The Germanization of Britain," published in the *NEW* of 15 Feb, Montgomery Belgion warns that British thought is being "invaded by emanations of the German mind," particularly through the work of intellectual refugees, of whom he takes Karl Mannheim to be exemplary. Although German thinking in its most "rigorously ratiocinative" form has had a salutary influence, it is more often given over to "the Extravagant and the Fanciful," and it is this "bad element which the more talented and more persuasive refugees at work in our midst with their pens . . . seem chiefly to be propagating among us at the moment" (137-38).

Responding on 1 Mar, Reginald Snell professes himself "bewildered" by instances of self-contradiction in Belgion's essay; for example, although Belgion describes Germanization as an "insidious" and "corrupting" danger, he concedes at one point that "the Germanization of Britain is not necessarily a bad thing" and ends by asserting that there is "no evidence of our being in danger of infection" (156). Snell suggests also that the alarmist tone of Belgion's essay is hyperbolic.

2. In *ASG*, TSE defines "orthodoxy" as a conscious regard for and defense of tradition, and "heresy" as its opposite, "the denial or neglect of tradition" (5.27). Here too he clarifies that he is not limiting these terms to their religious sense: "As we use the term *tradition* to include a good deal more than 'traditional religious beliefs,' so I am here giving the term *orthodoxy* a similar inclusiveness" (5.20). The opposition of heresy and orthodoxy, he writes, bears "some analogy to the more usual one of romanticism and classicism" in the realm of literature (5.23).

3. Herbert Read's letter, which appeared with Snell's on 1 Mar, denounces Belgion's article as "based on passionate hatred or perhaps merely on vulgar prejudice" (156). Read objects primarily to Belgion's implication that fanciful thinking is peculiarly German, and he points out that several of the writers of whom Belgion had complained were not in fact Germans – Mannheim, for example, was Hungarian. "The real evils," Read states in closing, "are prejudice, envy and confusion, and the prime source of these is the spirit of nationalism" (156).

Read shared his letter with TSE before it was published, and, in a private response dated 25 Feb, TSE wrote: "Your point that Mannheim is not a German but a Hungarian Jew, seems to me a quibble, as well [as] the point that some people with German names are really Americans; for the point is surely the tradition of German thought rather than the nationality of the author. . . . To take a man whose work I admire, Reinhold Niebuhr is an American, but his thought is German."

4. In spite of Read's long friendship and collaboration with TSE, the two were in some ways temperamentally opposed, with Read defining himself against TSE as "a romanticist in literature, an anarchist in politics, and an agnostic in religion." Read also championed psychoanalytic theory, which TSE generally dismissed, and which Belgion had specifically disparaged in his article as another product of German "fancy."

Full Employment and the Responsibility of Christians

The Christian News-Letter, 230 (21 Mar 1945) Supplement 7-12

The Supplement in the last issue raises two important questions, which are not of the same order.[1] The first is, what are the prospects of success of the Government's scheme for ensuring permanent full employment, and what is likely to happen if the operation of the scheme is not wholly successful. The second is, whether all Christians are under the obligation to support the scheme. Civis is extremely pessimistic in his expectations for the scheme if it does not receive full Christian support; and it is for this reason that he demands this support. In his treatment, these two questions are handled in such a way as to obscure rather than illuminate each other. I must attempt to clarify his views about the prospects for this measure before proceeding to the question which more directly concerns Christians.

Early in his argument, Civis cites the examples of the Russian and the German systems as evidence that the evil of mass unemployment can be cured. He proceeds to say, "But in our own country also some economists (notably J. M. Keynes) were expounding during the inter-war period, with increasing confidence and with a widening circle of assent, the view that mass unemployment could be avoided without sacrificing the essentials of freedom or of our democratic ideals if all concerned with the management of our economic affairs had the courage and wisdom to apply certain principles of policy" [9]. I call attention to the fact that the author disagrees with Lord Keynes, and the other economists quoted, on two points: first, he does not believe that it is enough for those concerned with the *management* of our economic affairs to exhibit moral and intellectual virtues – he thinks that a severe moral effort must be made by *everybody*. And second, the demand upon everybody is not simply for courage and wisdom – it is for a very high degree of self-sacrifice, indeed for the moral virtues, in the social order of the most convinced and devoted Christian. Neither Lord Keynes nor Sir William Beveridge could possibly admit that the feasibility of their designs was to this degree contingent upon the moral virtue of the nation.[2] To do so would be to recognize such a serious weakness in their plans as would, if confessed by the proposers, ensure the defeat of any measure in Parliament. Lord Keynes and the other economists have, therefore, the strongest grounds for objecting to this qualification of their schemes, and I do not see how they could fail to do so.

Let us consider all the conditions which Civis attaches to the success of the proposed measures. He tells us that success is "partly dependent upon effective collaboration among the nations" [11]: we are entitled to presume that for this collaboration moral virtues will have to be exhibited by the men and women of the other nations, similar to those for which he calls from us. What is asked for, first, is "a degree of self-discipline and self-confidence which this country has never yet shown except in time of war" [11]. From such dangers as inflation we can only be preserved by a combination of "courage and good sense" [12]. We must, indeed, show a degree and a universality of public spirit such as has never been known – except in time of war. The policy will not work unless "miracles of daring, mutual confidence, public spirit, intelligence and self-discipline are daily wrought by ordinary men and women in many different walks of life" [15]. There is, of course, a journalistic sense in which "miracles" are performed daily; but Civis is a Christian, and for him, therefore, a "miracle" must mean a good deal more than that; yet, on the other hand, his own notion of miracle is not quite clear. For he says that "as Christians we claim to have a reasonable and dynamic faith in the possibility of *just such miracles as these*" (italics mine) [15]. I do not know whether there is a precedent in Christian history for just such miracles as these: to judge from Civis' account, the precedents for such miracles, imperfect as they are, have occurred in English history rather from the emergency of war than from Christian faith. But Civis must know that a miracle, in the Christian sense, is worked through human agency but by divine operation: it is a gift of Grace – something which cannot be brought about simply by our saying to ourselves: "we must work miracles."

It is worth while, I think, to enquire why all the "new and ardent incentives," for which Civis calls, will be necessary [16]. We are not faced with a measure, or a series of measures, which, if it proves a failure, will be rescinded or become a dead letter. We may continue to get our full employment; but if we are not supplied with the new and ardent incentives to make the measure work, we shall have to be *forced*, and then what become of "the essentials of freedom" and "our democratic ideals"?[3] This seems to me the essence of the writer's persuasion; and if this is not his meaning, I do not know what he means. It is apparent in phrase after phrase. We are exhorted to display *self*-sacrifice. Private enterprise will be *encouraged* to contract or expand its capital expenditure [12]; when it fails to respond to encouragement, I suspect that what is meant is that it will be disciplined *pour encourager les autres*.[4] City councils must make it their business to consider "the wider interest of the nation, as *interpreted* by the central Government" [12; TSE's italics]. People in Birmingham must recognize that they have a *common interest* with South Wales [13]. We must learn to think of the Government as "we" and not as "they" – for most people, a considerable feat of imagination. Business men must abandon the "mixed feelings of fear and contempt" which they ordinarily maintain towards the State [16]. And workmen must work, and business men take risks and initiatives, for "new and ardent incentives" [16].

It should be added (as Civis does not point out) that we must learn to subordinate not only our local interests to those of Britain, but those of Britain to those of humanity at large. For as effective co-operation within the nation demands this subordination of interests, so the "effective collaboration among the nations" will demand subordination of national interests; and as the arbiter between our local interests is the National Government, so the arbiter between the national interests will have to be some Central Authority which has not yet taken shape.

Civis is aware that it is very unlikely that the majority of people will be ready so to subordinate their private and local aims – or indeed to surrender their private and local judgment: hence his exhortation to Christians to set the standard. And to do this, they must be animated by the spirit of a "Holy War" [11]. Now, the number of Christians in this country, professing and practicing, is generally held to be a small minority; of these again, we can hardly expect more than a minority to be sturdy enough to dedicate themselves to a Holy War; and of those who are sufficiently rugged, only a minority again may have the acumen and address for estimating particular situations and taking the right action in every one of them. And we are not mustered for a mere Thermopylae, but for an active and aggressive campaign with no end.[5] This small army, furthermore, will be hampered by an embarrassment of which Civis does not seem to be aware. Unless they have on their side the distinguished economists who have conceived and elaborated the scheme, they will find the sloth of the general public confirmed by the assurances of the experts. It would be a very surprising admission if those who had designed a machine intended to run on ordinary fuel confessed that after all a special Christian motor-spirit was necessary. The designers, certainly, are entitled to expect the ordinary degree of decency in the community; beyond that, they may make a reasoned appeal to intelligent self-interest, and even to an enlarged self-interest in which the individual will identify himself both with the nation and with posterity. And they will do well to appeal also to fear: fear of national weakness against enemies, fear of weakness in the economic competition which is another kind of warfare, fear of all the disastrous consequences of unemployment, which it does not need a Christian training to perceive or a Christian conscience to deplore. And this fear must be presented in such terms that the individual will fear for himself, the more social person will fear for his family, the more public-spirited person will fear for his local community: for fear is the most certain persuader of men to make sacrifices. And if this is still not enough, and nothing less than the inspiration of Christian feeling throughout the country is necessary, then Sir William Beveridge, and Lord Keynes, and the other economists, and the responsible Ministers, must stand up and tell the country the truth.

CHRISTIAN DUTY IN SOCIAL AFFAIRS

On the other hand, we must ask whether it is obligatory on Christians to give such whole-hearted support as Civis exhorts us to give. To some Christians, the scheme for full employment may seem *relatively* good. It may be good on certain assumptions, or in certain circumstances which we may regret but cannot help. It might be that the best that could be said for any such scheme would be that it made the best of a bad job. As interpreted by Civis, it would appear to be conceived primarily in terms of factory employment, and to postulate an increasing concentration upon industrial effort. Employers, we are told, must look to "larger output rather than higher prices" [13] – excellent, no doubt, in some industries; but in others that might result in quantity at the expense of quality. "That the productive resources of the nation," says the writer, "in men and materials, should be fully employed is a good and necessary objective of public policy" [14]. But if, when we say "productive resources," we are thinking of our capacity for making material objects, is this a noble aim in itself? Is it a Christian aim? And if you try to include, in "productive resources," our resources for producing all the manifestations of a higher culture and a more spiritual life, it is going to be very awkward for your economists to provide a scheme which will include these. But if not, then the concept of "fullness of life" for all men, which is set before us, is not much more comprehensive than that of fullness of stomach [15] – a very good aim so far as it goes, so long as we pay attention also to the quality of the food that is to go into stomachs. I am *not* suggesting that Christians should disparage, still less obstruct, this or any particular scheme for ending unemployment, though they may see a danger of regarding employment as an end instead of a means. The writer's hypothetical Christian, who would have the effrontery to declare that "unemployment was not an evil which he had any responsibility to mitigate or eradicate if he could" [8], is a figure of purely rhetorical value who should not have been introduced at all. There may have been Christians, there may still be Christians and non-Christians, who believe the problem to be insoluble: if so, that belief appears, on the face of it, to be a weakness of the head rather than the heart, though indifference may dispose them to the belief. There are probably more who see the problem of unemployment in such a wide context, interwoven with such other major issues, that any White Paper scheme will seem to them only a kind of road-repair – necessary, at best, to enable us to get the car to a garage, unless it collapses completely before we get it there.[6] Christians who see the matter in this light may still support the scheme, but will be in no frame of mind to talk of a Holy War: there may be more radical changes which seem to them more important still.

The Supplement which I have been discussing raises in the end an issue much larger than that with which it deals. This question is not merely that of what we think about a particular measure for combating a particular evil, great as that evil may be. It is the question of the attitude of the Christian, and of the Church, towards reforms and experiments undertaken by the temporal power for temporal ends. There are, of course, those who abstain or equivocate merely because they do not want to back the wrong horse: I am not speaking for them. Their motive is unworthy, though there is no reason why the Christian should be less shrewd or prudent in speculation than anybody else. No one can deny that it is the duty of the Christian to concern himself with the eradication both of the evils of which unemployment is the symptom, and of the evils which it brings about. In practice, the duty to "take action" about them will vary according to the position, the influence, the intelligence and the knowledge of the individual Christian; but we may say generally that it is the duty of the individual to do what he can in his own sphere of action. But Civis, I think, comes very near to saying that it is the duty of every Christian to support a particular measure. What he has written may be taken in this sense by some of his readers, who may infer, not that it is their duty to think about it and to weigh its consequences, but their absolute duty to support this measure, and to support it without reservations – and this absolute duty would absolve them from the more irksome duty of thinking for themselves. Now, an obligation which had this absolute application to all Christians would be an obligation upon the Church. The Church, as represented by theological and administrative authority, can only direct its members to pursue a particular course of action when no other course is compatible with one or more of the doctrines which the individual must profess to believe as a condition of being in communion with the Church. What Civis is dangerously near to saying – so near that some readers may think that he has said it, and accept it as true – is this: "this scheme for full employment provides the *only* means by which it is possible for the Christian to fulfil an important part of his duty towards his neighbour: therefore all Christians must support it." But this would be to introduce a new and fatal principle. It would mean that a group of economists, laymen and not all Christians, and certainly not Christian theologians, could draw up secular programmes for secular ends, approval of which the Church would then prescribe to its members.

I think that Civis is confused about the nature of Christian duty in social affairs; and where there is confusion, it is very likely that there will be a difference of interpretation: the author may seem to himself to have said one thing, and to the reader to have said another. When this happens, the reader is justified in basing his interpretation partly upon the tone in which the author speaks. I find the tone of Civis very disquieting: it evinces a certain imperiousness and impatience. The business man, for instance, will not respond with an immediate cordial glow to one who tells him so peremptorily that he "must abandon the mixed feelings of fear and contempt" towards the State: I am myself a small business man, and if I am not *wholly* culpable for having sometimes cherished such base passions in the past (and if not towards the State in the abstract, at least towards some particular department of State) I do not see why I should make a vow never to entertain them again, merely because a certain measure has become law. I think it is only frank to say this, to make clear that I am somewhat disturbed by the inspiration of this paper as well as by the course of reasoning. But I believe also that the author raises issues which are beyond the competence of the layman, however skilled in economics, and however sincere, devout and zealous in his Christianity – issues which are only to be considered by expert and authoritative theological minds. For I have very little doubt that if we accept the prescriptions of Civis for the attitude we are to adopt towards the Full Employment scheme, we shall find ourselves compelled to accept them for one social reform after another; the function of the Church will become merged into that of the State; the Christian will lose the sense of that loyalty which sometimes conflicts with, and always transcends, that to the State; the distinction between the eternal and the temporal will fall into desuetude; and we shall be well on the way to the religion of the State.[7]

METOIKOS[8]

NOTES

1. "Full Employment and the Responsibility of Christians," *CN-L*, 229 (7 Mar 1945), Supplement 8-16. The essay was signed "Civis" (Latin for "citizen"). Its author, John Primatt Redcliffe Maud (1906-82), had recently been appointed Secretary of the Office of the Lord President of the Council. He would rise later in the year to Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education.

As a member of the *CN-L* advisory board, TSE strongly objected to Maud's essay and urged J. H. Oldham not to publish it; Oldham instead persuaded him to write a rebuttal. ("I rather hoped to make a resigning point of it," he told Mary Trevelyan on 13 Mar, "but Artful Joe has made me write a reply to it instead.") Oldham introduced Maud's and TSE's identically titled Supplements together in the issue of 7 Mar: "The presentation of two different Christian points of view in regard to Full Employment and the attempt to relate them rightly to one another may lead us to the deeper issues involved and bring some clarification where there is now confusion" (7).

2. Sir William Henry Beveridge (1879-1963), economist, known as the "architect of the welfare state." His reports *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (1942) and *Full Employment in a Free Society* (1944) powerfully influenced the reformist legislation of the postwar era.

3. Maud calls for Christians "to be watchful that, when it appears that the public interest requires the further restriction of individual freedom . . . the State is not deterred by squeamishness from exercising compulsion" (16).

4. *Trans*: to encourage others.

5. Thermopylae (480 BC): the famous battle of the second Persian invasion of Greece, in which Xerxes's enormous army was held at bay for three days by a much smaller contingent of Greeks led by Leonidas of Sparta.

6. The 1944 White Paper on Employment Policy committed the Coalition government and its Labour successor to "the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment after the war" by means of Keynesian fiscal practices. Maud quotes the White Paper extensively in his essay.

7. TSE wrote John Hayward on 13 Mar: "I (and others) took strong exception to an article on the Full Employment Scheme, breathing . . . the worst fumes of the spirit of totalitarian bureaucracy, by CIVIS, which Oldham insisted on publishing. I hoped that it might turn out an opportunity to lay down my portfolio; but instead, I have had to write a reply to it. . . . Civis (confidential) is one John Maud, whose name must not be released because he is now a Civil Servant: in fact, it is suspected that he is the author of the White Paper on the subject himself."

8. In an ironic final defiance of "Civis," TSE signs himself with a Greek word (meaning "resident alien") that originally designated the disenfranchised immigrant class of ancient Athens. He had referred to himself as a "metic" as early as a July 1919 letter to Mary Hutchinson (*L1* 379). The term was familiar from the writings of Charles Maurras, who wielded the French version, "métèque," as an anti-immigrant epithet.

As soon as his essay was published, TSE wrote to John Maynard Keynes, whom he had known since the early 1920s: "I cannot refrain from sending to you two copies of the *Christian News Letter*, the first containing an article on Full Employment by *Civis* – an economist who must remain anonymous, but whom I dare say you know; and the other a reply by *Metoikos* who is myself. . . . [W]hat I want to know is, if you ever get this and have the time to read the stuff, whether I have taken your name in vain" (23 Mar 1945). Keynes replied: "I am on your side against Civis. . . . [T]he really fundamental point is what you say on your last page – and that does not go only for Christians." Keynes, *Activities 1940-1946: Shaping the Post-War World: Employment and Commodities* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 383-84.

The Germanization of Britain

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 26 (29 Mar 1945) 192

Sir, – Mr. Montgomery Belgion has now distributed the prizes for the best answers, but I do not think he ought to be allowed to escape from the platform without answering one or two more questions himself.[1]

He says that I complain that the terms *fanciful* and *extravagant* were not defined in the article: to this he replies that the article was devoted to illustrating what he means by them. Apart from the question of the difference between "definition" and "illustration," he has misunderstood my query. I wanted to know what he meant by saying that the Germans are extravagant as well as fanciful. He cannot mean merely that they are fanciful to an extravagant degree, for that would imply that other peoples were fanciful too. The way in which he introduced these terms suggests that *fanciful* and *extravagant* mean something different, else he would not have had to use both words.

Mr. Belgion says that "it is not the common German opinion" that Germany has been a single nation only in very recent times. Neither, I presume, is it the common German opinion that they are a fanciful and extravagant people, whose philosophy is noxious to the weak-headed Britons.

What Mr. Belgion seems to suggest is that the British should be protected from Germanic influence: I should prefer to see them strengthened to resist it. I believe that I have myself found German thought of inestimable value, simply because I tend to disagree with it violently; and it therefore forces me to think violently in order to discover the grounds of my disagreement. No contemporary thinker has more enriched my mental life in this way than Dr. Mannheim, to whom I feel I owe a considerable debt. As for Dilthey, Professor Hodges's introduction persuaded me that it was quite unnecessary for me to read a word of Dilthey himself: and an introduction which does that for one both deserves praise and induces gratitude to the introducer.[2]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In the ongoing correspondence regarding his article "The Germanization of Britain" (see 6.593, n.1), Belgion responded on 22 Mar to letters from TSE, Herbert Read, Reginald Snell, Oscar Levy, and George Jager. His rejoinder ended by calling Levy "the man for my money" among the various correspondents (184). Levy had reinforced Belgion's thesis, arguing that the thought of Richard Wagner, imported by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, was even more deleterious than Belgion's own examples of German influence in Britain. Belgion particularly approved Levy's closing anecdote about "the question which a visitor from Germany once asked his English friend who had introduced him to Professor Max Müller, of Oxford, a native of Germany: 'Have you no humbugs of your own?'"

2. In addition to Mannheim and other unnamed German refugees, Belgion's article had criticized the views of the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, as expounded in *Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction* (1944), by H. A. Hodges. Dilthey, according to Belgion, further exemplified German "extravagance and fancy," and he was therefore "as corrupting as Dr. Mannheim." Dilthey (1833-1911) sought to develop a theoretical basis for the social sciences and the humanities that would be no less systematic than, although different from, that of the physical sciences.

Responding to TSE in the *NEW* of 19 Apr, Belgion insisted that he had never "suggest[ed] that the British should be protected from Germanic influence" but only that "measures are desirable to oppose the spread among us by Germanic influence of the Fanciful and the Extravagant" (12). He also denied that he was obliged to define those terms, on the grounds that they were not of his own coinage. In the same issue of the *NEW*, Mannheim defended himself in "The Function of the Refugee: A Rejoinder" (5-6), drawing further scorn from Belgion in a final letter on 3 May. "I submit," Belgion wrote here, "that all sociology is largely tosh. And not only tosh, but pernicious, and ultimately degrading, tosh" (28).

Cultural Forces in the Human Order[1]

The word *culture* cannot be precisely defined: that is to say, no definition can be given which would be of much use to anyone previously unacquainted with the word itself or with what it designates. Furthermore, although the word cannot be taken as exactly synonymous with *civilization*, the meanings of the two words certainly overlap, and can be in some contexts identical; so that any attempt either to identify or to keep quite separate the meanings of the two words is certain to be stultified in practice. The difficulties to which the use of the word *culture* gives rise, however, are due not to obscurity of meaning, but to our failure to keep apart, and consequently to relate properly, a number of meanings which the word from time to time conveys. It is desirable therefore to begin by indicating the main distinct contexts in the mind of the author of this paper.

The term *culture* has different associations according to whether we have in mind the development of A an individual, of B a group or class, or of C a whole society. As it is a part of my thesis that the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a class or group, and that the culture of a class or group is dependent upon the culture of the society to which that class or group belongs, sense C will be the fundamental one. At first sight, however, sense C would appear to be the one which has the least relation to the biological sense of the word *culture*, that which we use in speaking of the bacteriologist's work, or of *agri*culture: for in this we have in mind the conscious manipulation of [the] living organism and its environment. The culture of a class or group, and still more the self-culture of an individual, may be to a considerable extent the fruit of a conscious purpose to attain "culture" (though the use of the term itself in this way is relatively modern); but we cannot regard the culture of a people or race as the result of any such deliberate purpose. Nevertheless, the use of the term in sense C is cognate and proper, inasmuch as the culture of a people may be considered as the pattern formed by a number of activities each of which realizes a purpose.

This third, or anthropological sense of the term *culture*, as used by E. B. Tylor in the title of his book *Primitive Culture*, was developed independently of the two other senses: but if we are considering highly developed societies, and especially contemporary society, we have to settle the relationship of the three areas.[2] It is at this point, precisely, that anthropology passes into sociology. Amongst men of letters and moralists, it has been common enough to discuss the first two senses, and especially the first, without relation to the third. The most notable example of this selection is Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold is concerned almost entirely with the individual and the kind of "perfection" at which he should aim.[3] It is true that in his famous classification of "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace" he concerns himself with a criticism of classes: but this criticism is confined to an indictment of the shortcomings of his three classes, and does not proceed to consider what should be the proper function or "perfection" of each class as a class.[4] The effect, therefore, is of all exhortation to the individual who would attain the peculiar kind of "perfection" which Arnold calls "culture," to rise superior to the limitations of any class, rather than to incarnate its highest attainable ideals.

The effect of thinness – I hesitate to say superficiality – which Arnold's abstract culture makes upon a modern reader, is partly due to the absence of social background to his picture, and to the falsification or distortion of reality by this culture in a vacuum. But it is also due, I think, to a failure to take account of another distinction of senses in which we use the term "culture," besides that already mentioned. There are at least three kinds of attainment which we may have in mind in different contexts. We may be thinking of *refinement of manners* – of *urbanity*: if so, we probably indicate a *social class* as the repository of them. We may be thinking of *learning* and a close acquaintance with the accumulated wisdom of the past: if so, our man of culture is the scholar. We may be thinking of *philosophy* in the widest sense – an interest in, and some ability to manipulate, abstract ideas: if so, we may mean what can be called the intellectual. Or we may be thinking of the *arts*: if so, we mean the artist and the amateur or dilettante. But what we very seldom have in mind, when we speak of culture, is all of these things at the same time. We do not find, for instance, that an understanding of music or painting, or indeed a purely aesthetic appreciation of anything, figures explicitly in Arnold's account of the cultured man: yet no one will deny that these attainments play a part in culture. Similarly, Mr. Herbert Read, in his excellent but very wilfully named little essay *To Hell with Culture*, means by "culture" only an antiquarian piety towards the works of plastic art of the past – Baedeker culture.[5]

If we look at the several activities of culture listed in the preceding paragraph, we must conclude that no perfect achievement in any one of them, to the exclusion of the others, can confer culture on anybody. We know that good manners, without education, intellect, or sensibility, is mere automatism; that learning without good manners or sensibility is pedantry; that intellectual ability without the more human attributes is admirable in the same way as the brilliance of a child chess prodigy; and that the arts without intellectual meaning are vanity. And if we do not find culture in any one of these activities alone, so we must not expect any one person to be accomplished in all of them; and we shall come to infer, that the wholly cultured individual is a phantasm; and we will look for culture, not in any one individual or in any one group of individuals, or in any one social class, but in the pattern of society as a whole – or at least, at this stage, in the upper levels of it. This seems to me a very simple conclusion: but it is one very frequently overlooked. People are always ready to consider themselves persons of culture, on the strength of one proficiency or another, when they are not only lacking in others, but blind to those which they lack. It is further worth mentioning that an artist of any kind, even a great artist, is not necessarily a man of culture merely on the strength of his art: artists are not only, very frequently, insensitive to other arts than those which they practise, but sometimes have very bad manners or very meagre intellectual gifts. The person who contributes to culture, however important his contribution may be, is not always a "cultured person."

It does not follow from this that there is no meaning in speaking of the culture of an individual, or of a group or class. We only mean that we look to the society as a whole for something to give significance to these meanings. On the other hand, we do not mean that in a society, of whatever grade of culture, the groups concerned with each activity of culture will be numerically distinct and exclusive: on the contrary, it is only by an overlapping and sharing of interests, by participation and mutual appreciation, that the cohesion necessary for culture can obtain. A religion requires not only a body of priests who know what they are doing, but a body of worshippers who know what is being done.

It is obvious that among the more primitive communities the several activities of culture are inextricably interwoven. The Dyak who spends the better part of a season shaping, carving, and painting his barque of the peculiar design required for the annual ritual of head-hunting, is exercising several cultural activities at once – artistic, religious, and military.[6] As civilization advances greater occupational specialization may evince itself: in the "stone age" New Hebrides, Mr. John Layard says that certain islands specialize in particular arts and crafts, exchanging their wares, and displaying their accomplishments, to the reciprocal satisfaction of the members of the archipelago.[7] But while the individuals of a tribe, or different islands or villages, may have separate functions – of which the most peculiar are those of the king and the witch-doctor – it is only at a much further stage that religion, science, politics, and art become abstractly conceived apart from each other. And just as the functional activities of individuals tend to become hereditary, and hereditary function tends to harden into class or caste distinction, and class distinction leads to conflict, so do religion, politics, science, and art reach a point at which there is a conscious struggle between them for dominance or autonomy. This friction is, at some stages and in some situations, highly creative: how far it is the result, and how far the cause, of increased consciousness need not here be considered. The tension within the society may be also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual: the clash of duties in the *Antigone* (which is not simply a clash between piety and civil obedience, or between religion and politics, but between conflicting laws within what is still a political-religious complex) represents a very advanced stage of civilization: for the conflict must have taken place in society before it could be made articulate by the dramatist and receive from the audience the response which the dramatist's art requires.[8]

As a society develops towards functional complexity and differentiation, we may expect the appearance of several cultural levels: in short, meaning B, the culture of class or group, will present itself. It will not, I think, be disputed that in any future society, as in every highly civilized society of the past, there will be several cultural levels. I do not think that the most ardent champions of social equality dispute this: the only difference of opinion turns upon whether the transmission of culture B must take place by inheritance – that is, whether the cultured class must propagate itself – or whether it can be hoped that some scheme of automatic selection can be found, so that every individual will in due course take his place at the highest cultural level for which his natural aptitudes fit him. This question, which few persons are able to argue dispassionately, must be excluded, with many others equally relevant, from the scope of the present paper. What is pertinent here is the fact that the emergence of more highly cultured groups does not leave the rest of society unaffected: it is itself part of a process of change of that total society. And it is certain – and particularly obvious when we are concerned with the arts – that as new values appear, as thought, sensibility and expression become more elaborate, other values vanish. This is only to say that you cannot expect to have all stages of development at once; that you cannot simultaneously produce great folk poetry at one cultural level and *Paradise Lost* at another. Indeed, the one thing that time is ever sure to bring about is the loss: the possibility of gain or compensation is almost always conceivable but can never be assured.

While it appears that progress towards higher civilization will bring into being the higher cultural levels, and the more specialized culture groups such as those which I mentioned, we must expect this development, in its later stages, to be attended with perils. Cultural disintegration is perhaps the most radical kind of disintegration which can affect a society. It is not the only kind, or not the only aspect under which disintegration can be considered; but whatever be cause and whatever be effect, the disintegration of culture is the most serious and the most difficult of repair. It must not be confused with another malady, that of a kind of ossification into caste, as in India, of what was originally a hierarchy of functions: even though (paradoxically in appearance) the two maladies may both have some hold upon British society to-day. Cultural disintegration may be pronounced to be present, when the culture of two or more social strata becomes so divergent that these approximate to having different cultures; and also when culture B tends itself to be broken into the fragments each of which represents one cultural activity alone. If I am not mistaken, some disintegration of the classes in which culture is, or should be, most highly developed, has already taken place – as well as cultural separation between one level of society and another. Religious thought and practice, philosophy, and art each tend to become an isolated area cultivated by different groups in no communication with each other. The artistic sensibility is impoverished by its separation from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic, and the vestige of *manners* may be left to those who, having their sensibility untrained either by religion or by art, and their minds unfurnished with the material for witty conversation, will have no context in their lives to give meaning to their behaviour.[9] And deterioration at this level is a matter of concern, not only to the limited group which is visibly affected, but to the whole people.

The causes for the decline of culture (in the total sense which I have tried to suggest) are as complex as the evidences of it are various. Its history, indeed, is not so much the history of a particular subject, as the history of this country and of the world, in recent times, from a particular point of view – I say "particular," but indeed it might be considered more "general" than any other. It may be traced in the accounts given, by other contributors to this volume, of the causes of more tangible social ailments; and the remedy, if there be any, must consist largely of the application of the right remedies to these other disorders.[10] But our being able to see the situation from this point of view, which is in a way more comprehensive than any of the others, should introduce an element of criticism and judgement which may affect our directions. To illustrate all the ways in which the problem of culture enters in to other problems would be itself a work of considerable scope. For it would mean reviewing almost every major problem with this aspect in mind. It should enter into our consideration of the relation of the great nations, regarded as individual "cultures," to each other; of the relation of the great nations to the smaller nations, and their future political and economic pattern;[11]* of the relation of parent nations to colonial nations; of the relation of the more advanced to the less developed, as in Africa; of the policy to be adopted towards those districts, such as some of the West Indies, where economic compulsion or inducement have brought together a number of people of different races, in a situation in which their ancestral cultures disappear without prospect of being replaced by a new composite culture.[12] It affects our whole policy of education – or should affect it, by giving us a scale of values, for I see very little evidence of its presence in current discussions of educational reform. If we take culture seriously, we must see that a people does not merely need enough to eat, but needs a proper *cuisine*: one symptom of the decline of culture in Britain is the indifference to the art of preparing food. Culture may even be described as what makes life worth living. And it is what makes it possible for other peoples and generations to say, in retrospect, that it was worth while for an extinct civilization or a past generation to have existed.

My excuse for giving so much space to a kind of description or suggestion, of what I mean by culture, without mentioning religion, or the Christian Faith, or Christendom, is the confusion into which we are apt to fall through not examining the meanings of the term. In proceeding from this point, we must caution ourselves about the difference of two points of view, between which we are liable to waver dangerously: that from which we consider the relation of culture to "religion" regarded from the outside, and the relation of culture to a particular religion which we do not call religion because for us it is the Christian Faith. And even in discussing culture in relation to Christianity, we are in danger of slipping into the assumption that the Christian Faith is circumscribed by European culture.

Even when I speak of a "relation" between culture and religion, I must withdraw the word "relation." The assumption of a *relationship* between culture and religion is perhaps the most fundamental error of Matthew Arnold in the essay which I mentioned at the beginning of this paper. In *Culture and Anarchy*, as it is not a piece of reasoning from carefully defined premisses, we find not only unexamined assumptions but also conclusions of which the author may not have been aware.[13] Certainly he gives me the impression (and his operation is largely the giving of impressions) that Culture (as he uses the term) is something more comprehensive than religion; that the latter is merely a necessary element, providing ethical structure and some emotional colour, to Culture, which is the highest value. And there is another point of view which, though perfectly sound, must be distinguished from that which I shall try to express. Brother George Every, in his admirable essay *Christian Discrimination*, is concerned with the more limited aspect of culture which is good taste in the arts and especially in the art of literature.[14] He is, certainly, tackling what I have already mentioned as one of the symptoms of decline, the separation of artistic and religious sensibility. It is right that this ailment should he diagnosed and prescribed for in this way; just as it is right and desirable both that we should have better ecclesiastical art and architecture, and that Christians should be able to apply, in the right way, Christian criteria to secular literature. But what I am here trying to get at, lies at another level.

It may have struck the reader that what I have said about the development of culture, and about the danger of disintegration of a developed culture, may apply also in the history of religion. The development of culture and the development of religion, in a society uninfluenced from without, cannot be clearly distinguished from each other: and it will be a question of the bias of the particular observer, whether an advancement of culture is held to be the cause of a higher stage of religion, or whether a progress in the development of the religious sense is held to bring about a refinement of culture. It is probably the history of the penetration of the Graeco-Roman culture by the Christian Faith, a penetration which had profound effects both upon this culture and upon the forms of the Faith and the direction of theological thought, that inclines us to assume a distinct and separate life of religion and of culture. But the culture with which Christianity came into contact (as well as that of the environment in which it began) was itself a religious culture in decline. So while we believe that the same religion may inform a variety of differing cultures, we may ask whether any culture can either come into being, or maintain itself, without a religious basis. We may go further, and ask whether what we call the culture, and the religion, of a people are not different aspects of the same thing: the culture being, essentially, the incarnation, so to speak, of a religion in a particular people.

As a society develops, a greater number of degrees and kinds of religious capacity and function, as well as of other capacities and functions, will make their appearance. (I am not here concerned with how far these differences may be due to differences in individual ability, and how far to opportunities of education and environment.) It is to be noticed that in some religions the differentiation has been so great that there have been in effect two religions – one for the populace and one for the adepts. The evils, and resulting abuses, of this "two nations" situation in religion are obvious. Christianity, at least until the end of the Middle Ages, showed an exceptional resistance to this disease. The schisms of the sixteenth century, and the subsequent appearance of other sects, can be studied either as the history of division of religious doctrine, or as a struggle between opposed social groups – as the disintegration of culture, or as the variation of doctrine. Yet, while the Faith cannot admit of wide divergencies of belief on the same level, it must find room for many *degrees* and varieties of imaginative and emotive reception of the same doctrines, just as it must embrace many variations of order and ritual. The Christian Faith also, *psychologically* considered – as a system of beliefs and attitudes in particular living embodied minds – will have a history: though it would be the grossest of errors to suppose that the sense in which it can be spoken of as developing and changing, implies the possibility of any greater sanctity or divine illumination being attainable at a more developed stage. (We do not assume that there is *progress* even in art, or that "primitive" art is necessarily inferior to the more sophisticated.) But one of the features of advanced development, whether we are taking the religious or the cultural point of view, is the appearance of *scepticism* – by which, of course, I do not mean infidelity or destructiveness (still less the unbelief which springs from mental sloth) but a habit of examining evidence, and a capacity for delayed decision. Scepticism is a highly civilized faculty, but one of which society can die: for the abuse of scepticism is pyrrhonism. Where scepticism is strength, pyrrhonism is weakness, the inability to endure the strain of doubt and decision: and it is a malady from which we suffer to-day culturally as well as in religion.

The conception of culture and religion as being, when each term is taken in the right context, different aspects of the same thing, is one which requires a good deal of explanation. But I should like to suggest first, that it provides us with the means of combating two complementary errors. The one – at present the commoner of the two – is that held by people who hope that culture can be preserved, extended, and developed in the absence of religion. This error may be held by the Christian in common with the infidel, and its refutation would require an historical analysis of considerable fineness, because the truth is not immediately apparent to superficial inspection. A culture may linger on and indeed produce, for a time, some of its most brilliant artistic and social successes when the religious faith has fallen into extreme decay: so that to accept the point of view here taken requires standing a long way off from the object. The other error is the belief that the preservation and maintenance of religion need take no account of the preservation and maintenance of culture: a belief which may even lead to the rejection of the products of culture as frivolity and obstruction to the spiritual life. To be in a position to reject this error also means standing afar from the object, refusing to accept the easy conclusion, when the culture that we see is culture in decline, that culture is dispensable. And I must add that to see the unity of culture and religion in this way neither implies that all the products of art can be accepted uncritically, nor provides a criterion immediately utilizable by everybody, for distinguishing between them: aesthetic sensibility must be extended into spiritual perception, or spiritual perception focused by aesthetic sensibility and practised taste, before we are able to pronounce upon either decadence or diabolism or nihilism in art; or before we can perceive that, in the end, the judgement of a work of art by either religious or aesthetic standards will come to the same thing.

The way of looking at culture and religion which I am trying to indicate is one so difficult that I am not sure that I grasp it myself except in flashes, or that I understand all its implications. It is also one which entails the risk of error at every moment, by some unperceived alteration of the meaning which either term has when the two are coupled in this way, into some meaning which either has when taken alone. For instance, it is easy to draw the false inference, because we do not meet culture in the abstract, but only the cultures of particular peoples and groups of peoples, that there is a

European religion, or even an English religion. It is in the aspect in which we see a religion as the whole *way of life* of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even perhaps in sleep, that we see that a religion must be incarnated in particular peoples; but, looking at it the other way round, we see that a culture which is the actualization of a religion which is also actualized in other cultures – a *universal* religion – is at least potentially a higher culture than that of an exclusive, racial, or state religion. This does not separate culture and religion; for just as the Christian Faith could be the spirit informing an infinite variety of human cultures, so there is also an abstract identity in culture, an element of identity which makes it possible for us to respect alien cultures, however remote. If there was no meaning to the word in the singular there would be no meaning to it in the plural.

The reader must constantly remind himself, as the writer of this paper has constantly to do, of how much is here embraced by the term *culture*. It includes not merely the kind of activity and interest which is considered the specific attribute of the persons involved by meaning B, but all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: to allow, at this point, a few pictures to pass through the mind, such as Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, a Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut in sections, will deflect the mind from a misleading concentration on Perpendicular Gothic and the music of Elgar.[15] But before drawing any conclusions from this comprehensiveness, a qualification must be introduced. The actual religion of no people at any time has so far been purely Christian, or indeed purely anything else, though the faith of Israel, immediately after one of its periodic house-cleanings, may have approximated more closely to purity than any other.[16] There are, in fact, always bits and traces, more or less absorbed, of more primitive faiths; there is also a tendency for parasitic beliefs to flourish to a dangerous degree; and also perversions, as when patriotism, which pertains to natural religion and is therefore licit and even encouraged by Christianity, becomes hypertrophied into a caricature of itself. Nor is the total religion of a people – or the total culture – ever completely unified: it is only too possible for a people to maintain contradictory beliefs, and to propitiate antagonistic powers. Apart from the fact that as cultures of different peoples differ, the culture of individuals of the same people can differ, and not only in degree.

The reflection that what we believe is not merely what we formulate and subscribe to, but that behaviour is also belief, and that even the most conscious and developed of us live also at the level at which belief and behaviour cannot be differentiated, is one that may, once it is animated by the imagination, have disconcerting consequences. It gives, of course, an importance to our most trivial pursuits, to the occupation of our every minute, which most of us cannot contemplate long at a time without the horror of nightmare. When we consider the extent of the integration implied, for the cultivation of the spiritual life, we must remember the possibility of grace and the exemplars of sanctity in order not to abandon the attempt and sink into despair. And when we turn to the problem of evangelization, to the building of a Christian society, this also gives reason to quail. To believe that *we* are religious people and that the other people are without religion and must be converted, is a belief which can be endured with some complacency. But to ask whether the people have not a religion already, a religion of which part of the ritual is (or was) Derby Day and the dog track, is as unpleasant as to suggest that part of the religion of a higher ecclesiastic is gaiters and the Athenaeum.[17] It is at least inconvenient to find that as Christians we do not believe enough, and that other people – and we among them – believe in too many things. And to suggest that the perfection of faith for man of flesh and blood, is not to be found in the mind only, or in a special and separate exercise of the emotions only, or in observance of the Law only, but is, so to speak, in the body also, is to suggest a considerable readjustment for most of us.

The reader will perhaps be impatient on finding this essay concerned rather with definition and analysis, than with prescription; and if he expects to find, everywhere in this volume, some easily apprehended plan of action for the period immediately succeeding this war, he will be disappointed by this essay. I might have fulfilled his expectations better, if I had occupied the space with designs for the establishment of municipal theatres, provincial orchestras, and modern art galleries, or suggestions for applying religious criteria to literature. All of these are serious subjects: but it seemed to me that the question of what culture is, from a religious point of view, and what the Christian faith means, from a cultural point of view, had a certain priority. Several assumptions have been questioned. It is commonly assumed that culture exists, but that it is the property of a small section of society; and from this assumption it is quite usual to proceed to one or the other of two conclusions – either that culture can only be the concern of a small number, and that therefore there is no place for it in the society of the future; or that in the society of the future the culture which has been the possession of the few must be put into the possession of everybody. This assumption and its consequences are parallel to those involved in the attack on the ascetic life and the monastic principle: for just as culture which consists of practices only possible for a small number of people is now deprecated, so was the enclosed and contemplative life contemned by extreme Protestantism, and celibacy disapproved almost as a perversion.[18] As we tend to identify culture with some part of culture, so we tend to identify the religious life with the religious life of some part of society. Many people will admit either that our culture ought to be Christianized, or that our fragment of Christendom ought to be refined by more culture: but as I do not accept the kind of separation which they take for granted, so I do not find satisfactory the kind of unification which they advocate. If my definition has anything to commend it, then it is a point from which to start, and will affect our views of what is to be done in the matter of religious education, and in that of re-union of the churches, and in many other problems which otherwise would seem still more remote.

I hesitate to attempt to illustrate the application of this view in any particular areas of practical activity, for the reason that in considering these, and in suggesting lines of action, it is always possible that I may introduce fresh premisses and personal opinions which, whether right or wrong, are not strictly deducible as a consequence of the foregoing account, and may, by presenting some unpalatable doctrine, jeopardize my hope of commanding assent to what I have already said. On the other hand, I should not like to leave the reader under the impression that the questions with which I have been occupied have no bearing whatever upon action. If we must, then, supply some evidence of applicability, it is impossible to evade the problem of education: but I shall confine myself to the few remarks most likely to win the assent of anyone who has not already rejected what precedes. I have assumed throughout, that in any civilized society there must be different, distinguishable cultural levels, according to the increasing complexity of interdependent functions. The present agitation for educational equality is mostly impelled, I take it, not by a belief that everyone should have the same degree of education, but by a belief that what is considered superior education should be bestowed upon those who have the native ability to profit by it, rather than merely on those whose financial advantages make it possible. To this belief, stated in this way, I do not see how anyone can take exception. But there are two dangers, one or the other of which I have found latent in many recent public statements. One is a *Liberal* tendency, to regard education, and Culture B so far as it is attainable by education, in terms of material wealth or its equivalent in power or in social prestige; to emphasize, in consequence, opportunity for the individual rather than the benefit of the community as a whole. Just as it was once assumed that the man who made a fortune was incidentally conferring a benefit upon the community, so we may be in danger of assuming that the individual whose intellectual brilliance, unaided by parental fortune, gains him the highest academic awards is thereby benefiting society also. The other danger is the tendency to assume that it is more important that everyone should be educated, than that the highest standards of education for the few should be maintained: acting upon this impulse, we are likely to take the easy course of relaxing the admission requirements of the universities, rather than the more difficult one of adapting the tuition in the schools to the requirements of the universities.

A parallel appears in the matter of religious education. No one would maintain that the higher levels of religious knowledge should be accessible only to those of a certain social or economic position. The notion that religious instruction should be reserved for those who want it – that is, for young children whose parents want it – and that others may remain in ignorance, is still held. But the view that is likely to prevail, is that a uniform and "undenominational" religious instruction should be given in schools, to all pupils whose parents do not take the trouble to object. On the obvious advantages and disadvantages of this uniformity in comparison with the actual religious instruction in schools on religious foundations I shall not touch, for this is not a question which has been overlooked. But on the view of culture and religion which has here been advanced, we cannot afford to neglect any level; and if we are seriously concerned about the quality of the education provided for the individuals representing Culture B, we must ask what is to be done on this level for religious education also. For the great majority, whose religious life will remain largely on the plane of behaviour, instruction up to the age of fifteen or sixteen might suffice.[19] But those who are capable of profiting by further education, should be provided with the opportunity of further religious education as well. We cannot look back on any past period which will provide an exact pattern for a future Christendom; and we have to take thought, in considering the maintenance and development of the different religious-cultural levels in future society, of matters which our ancestors left to look after themselves. Our problems of general education are much more complex than theirs, and we find ourselves obliged to lay much heavier burdens upon the educational system than they did. We cannot afford to be content to provide a religious education of the elementary kind which was adequate three hundred years ago, and which only appears modern because it now takes account of the results of textual criticism and archaeological exploration. We need, in fact, if we are to renew a Christian culture, to supply our Culture B with a laity (to say nothing of the priesthood) of men and women whose intellect and sensibility qualify them for a higher religious education than is at present, for the laity, obtainable. The Christendom of the future cannot afford to do without an *élite* among the laity; and if we really mean Christendom, and not merely a body of cultivated church people, these will be the same people in whose guardianship will repose Culture B in the secular sense, for it will, necessarily, be the same culture. As to what part the educational institutions can play in this education I have no suggestions to offer. I do not envisage an identical *curriculum* for every individual, but one variable according to the peculiar aptitudes and interests of individuals – historical, philosophical, sociological, ascetic, legal, or artistic – so as to have the closest bearing upon each person's other studies and activities. For whereas it is more practical in dealing with children to provide religious instruction as a separate study (inasmuch as at this stage of consciousness the greater part of their religious *education* is being received unconsciously from their family and their environment and the culture of the society to which they belong), for those of more adult years a process of conscious re-integration of religion and culture is appropriate. Our thinking about religious education seems to me a century behind our thought about other educational matters. And there would follow, I think, as an effect of the establishment of higher standards of training of the religious intellect and sensibility among the laity, a higher standard of culture among the priesthood.

To proceed in a straight line is not the only method of exposition; and there is sometimes something to be said for leaving the reader to draw mistaken inferences if he will, and returning to correct them afterwards. I think that some readers will have drawn the conclusion, at an earlier stage, that I have *identified* religion with culture; that I am, like Matthew Arnold, more interested in the preservation and development of culture than I am with the truths of the faith which I, together with the other contributors to this volume, profess.

I spoke at one point of the culture of a people as an *incarnation* of its religion; and while I am aware of some temerity in employing such an exalted term, I cannot think of any other which, used in this way metaphorically, would better express my intention to avoid slipping into the error of *identification*. The truth, partial truth, or falsity of a religion neither consists in the cultural achievements of a people which professes that religion, nor can it be exactly tested by them. For what a people may as a whole be said to believe, as shown by its *behaviour*, is, as I have said, always something more, and a great deal less, than its professed faith in its purity. Furthermore, a people whose culture has been formed by a religion of partial truth, or one which has not received the full revelation, may live that religion (at some period in its history, at least) with greater fidelity than another people which has had the true light. It is only when we contemplate our culture as it ought to be, if our society were a really Christian society, that we can speak of Christian culture as the highest culture; it is only in referring to one or another development of it, at different periods in the past, and not by referring to any one epoch as a whole, that we can affirm that it is a higher culture than any other in history. In comparing our culture at the present day to that of some non-Christian peoples, we must be prepared to confess, in one respect or another, shameful inferiority. I do not overlook the possibility that Britain, if it consummated its actual apostasy by reforming itself according to the tenets of some secular religion, might produce a culture superior to what we can boast to-day. This would not be evidence – though everyone, at that stage, would take it as such – that the new religion was the Truth and that Christianity had been disproved. It would merely prove that any religion, while it lasts, and on its own level, gives a meaning to life, and preserves the mass of humanity from that boredom which ends as despair.[20]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Prospect for Christendom: Essays in Catholic Social Reconstruction*, ed. Maurice B. Reckitt (London: Faber & Faber, 1945), 57-69. TSE's is the fourth of sixteen essays in the volume, which also includes an introduction by Maurice Reckitt and an epilogue by P. E. T. Widdrington. Other contributors include V. A. Demant, Ruth Kenyon, Philip Mairet, W. G. Peck, and Charles Smyth. The introduction explains: "It is the purpose of this book to suggest, first upon what grounds Christian social action can be taken which will be validly such, and secondly, by what means society can move from where it is to-day to where it can reasonably hope to be to-morrow" (8). Although TSE informed Reckitt on

6 Jan 1944 that the board of Faber & Faber had accepted the volume, he warned him that the firm could not "absolutely assure publication before the spring of 1945." He also asked Reckitt to reconsider the book's title, originally *Tomorrow's Christendom*. The revised title was agreed upon by 3 Feb, and the book was finally published on 1 May 1945.

Parts of TSE's essay would be republished, heavily revised, as "The Three Senses of 'Culture,'" the first chapter of *NTDC*. Two passages, identified below, are adapted from the first section of the 1943 essay "Notes towards a Definition of Culture" (6.343). The first note there details the composition history of these related pieces.

2. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 2 vols (1871); 3rd edition, revised (London: John Murray, 1891). TSE discusses this work in his 1913 graduate essay "The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual" (1.106).

3. In the preface to *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869), Arnold famously defines "culture" as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (viii).

4. Arnold uses "three distinct terms, *Barbarians, Philistines, Populace,* to denote roughly the three great classes into which our society is divided" (105).

5. Herbert Read, *To Hell with Culture: Democratic Values Are New Values* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Trubner, 1941). TSE appears to have in mind, for instance, Read's comment on the early nineteenth century: "If you knew all about the things of the past, you were recognized as a man of taste, and the sum of the nation's 'tastes' was its 'culture'" (11). "Baedeker": tourist guidebook, as in TSE's 1919 poem "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar."

6. The Dyaks or (usually) Dayaks are the indigenous inhabitants of Borneo in the South Pacific. By the late nineteenth century, their ritual traditions of headhunting were largely abolished through the influence of Christianity and the injunctions of European colonial powers.

7. TSE appears to be describing the Kula trade ring in and around the Trobriand Archipelago, the subject of Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). In contrast, Layard's *Stone Men of Malekula* (1942) makes clear that no such artisanal specialization was practiced in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), where the natives traded mainly in commodities such as turmeric leaves and pigs. Layard (1891-1974) was a protégé of W. H. R. Rivers and a friend of Auden and Isherwood. Rupert Doone apparently introduced him to TSE in 1939, and TSE published his second book, *The Lady of the Hare*, in 1944 as Layard turned from anthropological to psychological subjects. TSE's source for the cultural practice erroneously attributed here to the "'stone age' New Hebrides" is probably a misunderstood or misremembered conversation in which Layard was speaking of the Trobriands.

8. This paragraph from "Notes towards a Definition of Culture, I" (6.343-44) appears here with revisions.

9. This sentence from "Notes towards a Definition of Culture, I" is reused here with minor revisions (6.345).

10. Other chapters of the book consider, from a Christian sociological perspective, such contemporary issues as nationalism, urbanization, the exploitation of nature, the expansion of state power, and international relations in the context of the war.

11*. TSE's note: "This is touched upon, though without any discussion of the meaning of 'culture,' by E. H. Carr, *Conditions of Peace*, Part I, ch. iii.

> In a clumsy but convenient terminology which originated in Central Europe, we must distinguish between 'cultural nation' and 'state nation.' The existence of a more or less homogeneous racial or linguistic group bound together by a common tradition and the cultivation of a common culture must cease to provide a *prima facie* case for the setting up or the maintenance of an independent political unit. [62]

But Mr. Carr is here more concerned with the problem of political unity, than with the preservation of cultures, or the question of whether they are worth preserving, in the political unity." TSE quotes Carr's *Conditions of Peace* (London: Macmillan, 1942), a book whose focus on "purely political" – as opposed to cultural – problems he criticized in "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe" (6.523-24).

12. The inhabitants of the West Indies (i.e., the Caribbean islands) include, in varying admixtures, the descendants of the native peoples, of several European colonial powers, and of the many slaves transported from Africa.

13. Arnold more than once describes his work as "unsystematic"; for example: "Therefore I propose now to try and enquire, in the simple unsystematic way which best suits both my taste and my powers, what culture really is, what good it can do, what is our own special need of it" (4-5).

14. The English historian and poet George Every SSM (1909-2003) was a close friend of TSE. In *Christian Discrimination* (London: Sheldon; New York: Macmillan, 1940), Every advocates the development of a "Christian critical attitude" (63) as a corrective to a modern "decline of taste" (xi).

15. Derby Day, the first Saturday in June, when the prestigious Derby Stakes is run at Epsom Downs Racecourse; Henley Royal Regatta and Cowes Week, annual rowing events, the former on the Thames, the latter on the Solent; the "Glorious Twelfth" of August, opening of the shooting season for certain game birds; "cup final," the last match in a football (soccer) competition, and particularly in the Football Association Challenge Cup tournament; pin table, apparatus for playing pinball; Wensleydale cheese, made exclusively for several centuries in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire, until the requisitioning of milk and rationing of cheese during World War II permanently damaged the cheese industry there; Perpendicular Gothic, the late phase of English Gothic architectural style, dating from the late thirteenth to the mid-sixteenth century; Edward Elgar (1857-1934), composer of such works as the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, the *Enigma Variations*, and *Cockaigne (In London Town)*.

16. In several biblical episodes (Judges 10:15-16, 1 Samuel 7:3-6, 2 Kings 23:1-7, etc.), the Israelites, after straying toward idolatry or polytheism, are recalled by their prophets to faith in the one God; it is the accompanying acts of repentance and purgation that TSE here refers to as "house-cleanings."

17. Until the 1960s, black gaiters were part of the traditional uniform of archdeacons and bishops in the Church of England. Membership in the elite Athenaeum Club was similarly conventional, or at any rate stereotypical, for "higher ecclesiastics."

18. The corresponding sentence in *NTDC* makes clear that TSE is thinking specifically of "the Puritan antipathy to monasticism and the ascetic life."

19. TSE recurs here to the much-disputed language of *ICS* suggesting that "For the great mass of humanity . . . their Christianity may be almost wholly realised in behaviour" (5.697). Some of the controversy over this passage is reflected in TSE's response to Reckitt in "Christian Society" (6.7) and his letter of 22 Oct 1943 to the *Church Times* (6.432).

20. TSE sent this essay to J. H. Oldham on 28 Oct 1944, writing: “If you should think it of interest to members [of the Moot], I suggest that the part to be circulated should be only the first 20 pages. The concluding remarks on education were included to satisfy a suggestion [of] the editor, and I should not preserve them apart from this book [i.e., *Prospect for Christendom*]. They are too sketchy to represent my views well.” Oldham replied on 1 Nov, “I like the chapter of your book and will have it copied for the Moot,” adding that “what I particularly like is the last page and a half about the difference between incarnation and identification, and the fact that people having a religion of partial truth may live it with greater fidelity.” Oldham had the entire paper retyped, mimeographed, and sent out that day.

Mr. Charles Williams[1]

The Times (17 May 1945) 7

Mr. Charles Williams, of the Oxford University Press, poet, critic, and novelist, died at Oxford on Tuesday after an operation. He was 58.

Charles Walter Stansby Williams, the only son of R. W. Stansby Williams, was born on September 20, 1886, and was educated at St. Albans School and University College, London. His published work has been unusually varied. It includes poetry, poetic drama (notably his *Thomas Cranmer*, the Canterbury play of 1936), historical biography (*James I* and *Henry VII*), theology (*Descent of the Dove* and two shorter books), literary appreciation and interpretation (including *The Figure of Beatrice*, a study of Dante, and a brilliant introduction to the poems of Milton), and a series of remarkable novels with a supernatural element which began with *War in Heaven* in 1930 and ended with *All Hallows Eve* in 1945.[2]

Some of his work was written under great pressure, and not all of his subjects were of his own choosing; but he never wrote a book which was not worth reading, or which was not the fruit of conscientious study. On the subjects of his own choice he was almost alone in his generation, for his peculiar understanding of mystical experience and for a sometimes terrifying insight into good and evil. His poetry is often very obscure, and may perhaps never be the delight of more than a small number of devoted readers.[3] But his novels, his three books on matters of Christian doctrine, and his criticism, are of wider interest as well as of permanent value.

In addition to his writing, and his employment in the Oxford University Press, Williams had for many years been accustomed to conduct evening tutorial classes. In this profession also he excelled: his torrential enthusiasm, his unusual gift for extended quotation, the power and the humility of his personality and his radiation of goodness, both won the hearts of his pupils and inspired in them a love for the literature of which he spoke. In the last few years he had lectured also for the University in Oxford; and no possible distinction could have given him more pleasure than the honorary degree of Master of Arts which was conferred upon him by that university. To his friends he was endeared by his simplicity, purity, and warmth of heart. To the Church of England, of which he was, in his writings as in his life, a faithful servant, his death is a serious loss. He married in 1917 Florence, daughter of James Warrell Conway, who survives him with a son.

NOTES

1. Unsigned obituary notice. Williams died 15 May of an acute intestinal obstruction. TSE wrote to Sir Humphrey Milford the next day: "The death of Charles Williams comes indeed as a great shock to me personally. He was a loved friend as well as an author whose work I very much admired and which, I feel, has never yet received its due appreciation."

On 22 May, TSE wrote to Florence Williams, the writer's widow: "While I was still dazed by the shock, I was rung up by *The Times*, and asked to write for them a notice about Charles. I was under two inevitable disadvantages: lack of time and lack of space. To try to write impersonally, and yet give a personal picture of a man, and at the same time to sum up his work, in a few hours and in a few hundred words, is a task which is impossible to perform to one's own satisfaction. I hope that, in these circumstances, what I wrote was not altogether unworthy."

2. *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury* (1936); *James I* (1934); *Henry VII* (1937); *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church* (1939); *The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante* (1943); Introduction to *The English Poems of John Milton*, ed. Walter Skeat (1940). Williams's "two shorter books" of theology are *He Came Down from Heaven* (1938) and *The Forgiveness of Sins* (1942). His novels included *War in Heaven* (1930); *All Hallows Eve* (1945), for which TSE wrote an introduction in 1948; and five others, of which the best known is *Descent into Hell* (1937).

3. Williams published six volumes of poetry, from *The Silver Stair* (1912) to *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944). TSE confessed repeatedly in his letters that he found Williams's poetry impenetrable; for instance, he told Theodora Bosanquet on 13 Oct 1941, "I can't understand his poetry," and Desmond MacCarthy on 14 July 1943, "He also writes poetry but that is very obscure and I have never cared so much for it." Williams himself considered poetry his true vocation, and the epitaph on his tombstone is the single word "Poet."

Cultural Diversity and European Unity

Review-45, 2 (Summer 1945) 61-69[1]

What I want to put before you are some recent reflections upon the problem of diversity of local cultures within a national unity, and of national cultures in a European unity. My own observations have been, of course, chiefly of the relation of cultures within this small island. If I venture to present my thoughts upon this subject to you, it is because I believe that Europe itself is a pattern of just such diversities, and the problem of the union of several cultures in one nation should throw some light on the problem of the union of several national cultures in one Europe. That is a problem which concerns us all very deeply. When I speak of the situation in one small corner of Europe, however, I am not suggesting that Britain, as a union of England, Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland (and in a non-political sense we may include Southern Ireland) is a microcosm of Europe, or that every "nation" within Europe is, or should be, made up of several cultures according to the pattern of Britain. No two nations will, in this respect, be made up in quite the same way. But every nation has its own diversities; and the question, how may several cultures exist together not merely in peace, but each *contributing* to the life of the others, is fundamentally the same question whether we are looking at one nation, or at Europe itself.

There is one point which I want to make at the beginning. I find three chief kinds of relationship between nations, and between the parts of each nation: the *political*, the *economic* and the *cultural*. Now the first and the second are not my business. But the three cannot exist, or be promoted, quite separately from each other. In a really satisfactory situation between any two countries, their *political* relations would be harmonious; their *economic* relations would be to their mutual advantage; and their *cultural* relations would be fruitful. If any one of these conditions is lacking, it is obvious that those two countries will, at the least, always be in danger of *unfriendly* relations. And of these three kinds of relation, the cultural is perhaps the most important in the long run; because, without good cultural relations – which means, not merely respect or admiration for each other, but mutual influence – two peoples simply cannot understand each other. And, not only are all these three kinds of relation necessary, but they all affect each other. If I consider cultural relations alone, it is, first, because I do not know everything; second, because, even if one were a master of each of these subjects, it is practically impossible to talk about everything at once; and, third, because many people have talked and written about political matters alone, and about economic matters alone, or about politico-economic matters alone. Therefore, the best contribution I can make is to talk about cultural matters alone; recognising, as political and economic writers often fail to recognise, that I am treating something by itself, which nevertheless does not *exist* by itself.

Next, what do I mean by culture? There is not time to explain this as fully as I should like. When we speak of politics and economics we can be fairly sure of what we are talking about, and fairly sure that the person who speaks and the person who listens will mean near enough the same thing to be able to come to an understanding. But "culture" is a different kind of concept altogether. When we talk about it we are always in danger of meaning something less than the whole. We think, of course, of literature, music and art. When we ask about the culture of another country, we usually expect to be told about its achievements in one or another art, in philosophy or in science. But on the other hand, when we say that a particular people has a high degree of culture, we do not mean simply that it has produced a considerable number of great artists or scientists. We should not say that a people which produced, and appreciated, fine pictures, but which did not produce, or perform, or appreciate good music, was a people which had an altogether satisfactory culture. And if a people produced very fine art of every kind, but neither had any scientific work to its credit, nor could understand the scientific work of other peoples, I think that we should say that it was still in a stage of primitive or medieval culture. So what we really mean, when we speak of the culture of a nation as its art or its science, is, that these achievements are *evidence* of its state of culture, not that they constitute its culture themselves. And actually, no people ever practises, or is interested in, one art alone, or is wholly given to art without science, or science without art. Most countries excel in some arts, or in some sciences rather than in others: but I think we expect a civilised country to respect and cultivate them all. And finally, when we speak of a people's culture we do not mean merely the *sum* of its achievements in the arts and sciences; we mean something more. We also include its social behaviour: its degree of humanity and politeness. We include in fact its *moral* qualities, without which its members would hardly appear to be more than highly intelligent apes. We include also its religion, for the religious tradition of a people has been very influential in shaping its way of life. We cannot say simply that a Christian people has a higher culture than a non-Christian one; for one people may hold its Christian faith in a very degraded form, and a non-Christian people may refine an inferior religion; though we can say in general that an inferior religion tends to prevent the culture of its believers from rising very high, and a superior religion tends to raise that culture to something better than it would have been without it. So I think that the best description of culture I can give is a phrase which I have just used: and say that a people's culture is its *way of life* – its whole social pattern and what comes out of it. And I think we can agree that there are higher and lower ways of life, and that we should want not only our own people, but every other people, to have the highest culture, or way of life, of which it is capable.

Now it follows from this, that culture is not a subject which can be handled in the same way as *politics* or *economics*. We can make a design for a political or an economic system, and more or less carry it out: but we cannot *construct* a culture. In other words, politics and economics can be managed by the intellect in a way which culture cannot; or, one could say that politics and economics are concerned primarily with social *engineering*, and culture primarily with *growth*. A culture, like a tree, takes a long time growing; you can do something to help or hinder it, but you have to let it follow its own nature in growing. You can destroy it, and then you have to wait for another tree to grow, and it will take as long in growing as the one that you cut down. But our danger is, that when we talk of our culture and of doing something to improve it, we easily slip into thinking in terms of politics or economics, or into talking about art or science, simply because we instinctively try to put any problem into the most manageable terms. So it often happens that when we think we are talking about culture we are really talking about something else.

There is another thing about culture. Politics and economics can be handled by "experts," all sitting in one place: though I do not believe that it is good for a country even to have its government too centralised. And artists tend to congregate in the metropolis; and scientists in scientific centres equipped for their work. But culture is everywhere, or it is nowhere: the whole people has it, or nobody has it. A small cultured élite in an otherwise barbarous country is probably an élite which has absorbed some *foreign* culture. If culture is to flourish in the metropolis, it must flourish in every village. It will be slightly different in every region, as also on every social level; because it is something which grows. The whole culture of a nation will be a harmonious organic pattern of a number of parts. The parts would not be the same if they were not parts of that whole; and the whole would not be a whole body if it was not composed of parts which differ from each other.

Now I have said enough, within my present limits, about culture in general; and I should like to illustrate what I have said by considering the situation in this island. I limit it to this island, because the problem of Ireland, even of Northern Ireland, is somewhat different. British culture then, in this limited frame, is composed of three main parts: English, Scottish and Welsh. Each of these parts has differences within itself: the most conspicuous being that between the northern or north-western part of Scotland, which is Celtic, and still to some extent Celtic-speaking, and the southern or south-eastern part, which is chiefly Saxon and Scandinavian, and has a language related to English – quite incorrectly considered a dialect of English – but which is perhaps the one language in the world which no Englishman has ever been able to learn to speak properly.[2] What unites these two cultures of quite different origin into one nation is partly that they have come to seem less foreign to each other than the English are to both of them. Wales, apart from some colonisation from England, Ireland and Flanders, is homogeneous, and has preserved its language with surprising tenacity and success; the division between north and south Wales is due to reasons of geography, natural resources, and the lack of road and rail systems. It must be remarked that the fact of having Celtic languages and Celtic blood does not appear to create any particular sympathy between the Welsh and the Northern Scots: they seem to me to get on rather better with the English than with each other. They are, it is true, different kinds of Celt: the Welshman, in language, being much closer to the Breton (and, if the language had not died out, to the Cornishman), and the Scot closer to the Irishman – with whom, however, he does not always appear to have much in common.[3]

Within Scotland and Wales there have been, in our time, regional and even nationalistic movements of considerable interest: I say of considerable interest, because so far as I know I may be the only Englishman who is seriously interested in them – and it is this reason, rather than any very profound knowledge, which encourages me to talk about them. These movements are confusing and confused for two reasons. For one thing, they are, most of the time, minority movements in both countries: and when a nationalistic movement is denounced or derided by people of the same nationality, an outsider may be pardoned for not only suspending judgment but for dismissing the matter from his mind. Of course one man may become a nationalist because of some personal grievance, and another man may be anti-nationalistic because of some personal advantage. And the supporters of nationalism may split into warring factions because their politics differ: there can be nationalists of the Right and nationalists of the Left. The other source of confusion is more important. The general tendency is, either to think in politico-economic terms, or in cultural terms alone. Now politico-economic considerations, isolated from cultural considerations, tend to-day towards centralisation. It is better for military war, it is better for economic warfare: in short, it is more "efficient," as the modern world thinks of efficiency. So, even if the regionalist is thinking in terms of the efficiency of his own region, it can be argued that this local efficiency is at the cost of the efficiency of the whole. And cultural considerations, isolated from politics and economics, have a way of appearing slightly ridiculous. They tend to a sentimental attitude towards the past, a revival or an artificial preservation of ways of life which are out of place in the modern world.

The conclusion at which I have at present arrived, is that regionalism, in the form in which it has been advocated in Scotland and Wales, has no great chance of success. Yet, admitting all the objections that can be made to any of the forms which it has taken, I remain obstinately of the opinion that it is something of quite fundamental importance, for our culture. What is unfortunate is, that so far it has represented only an attempt, by some Scots and Welsh, to defend *their* cultures against being absorbed into, or replaced by, English culture. To the Englishman, who naturally prefers his own culture, and therefore thinks it superior, this seems very perverse. But this is not the true problem at all. The problem can only be properly seen, when Englishmen become regionalists too. I do not mean that they should be regionalists in the same way; but if they became regionalists, the whole way of regionalism would be altered for the better. It has appeared so far only as of concern to the peoples who feel themselves in an inferior position: it should be of equal concern to those who are satisfied or are in a dominant position.

What I think we should recognise is this: that if the English are to preserve the English way of life, it is important for them that the Scottish and the Welsh should preserve theirs. The latter, as I have suggested, may think that the danger to their culture is of its being replaced by another culture, that of England. But the forces which are destructive of traditional culture in one part of the island are at work in the whole of it; as the culture of Scotland and Wales disappears, the culture of England disappears too. The tendencies of centralisation, of centrally controlled bureaucracy, of conurbation – that is to say, the tendency for big cities to grow still bigger – of industrialisation, of an economy which favours factory production, and factory life, the tendency to *uniformity* in all things: these tendencies are operative everywhere. In the early stages of this process, it bears more hardly upon those people who are more conscious of their local culture. But the pressure is not that of England upon Scotland and Wales, it is the pressure of London upon the whole island; and in the end there will no longer be these inequalities, because there will no longer be these differences. The process *tends* also to mix the population in blood by demanding mobility of labour; it tends to produce one mixed race, to replace three or more distinct ones.

I must explain that I am not a supporter of any race doctrine, certainly of no philosophy of race superiority and inferiority in the modern sense. It is not blood that I am interested in, but the transmission of *culture*. Now superficially the evolution of one uniform culture, by mixing up races into one race, may appear a good thing, for it would appear to do away with race jealousies and animosities. Biologically, it may be good, bad or indifferent, from the point of view which I take: I am concerned with the preservation of local culture, and I am not interested in whether the people who have it are the descendents in blood of those who started it, or not. The fact that the different parts of Britain, and the different regions of England itself, were first colonized by peoples of somewhat different origin – as is still indicated by such names as Wessex and East Anglia – no doubt has something to do with local differences in temperament and in culture: but for our purposes, it is the remaining differences in culture that are important, not the original differences of race.[4] And I maintain that in a country where these differences exist, progress consists in a harmonisation of these local differences, not in their obliteration. A country with no local variations of culture will not just have a uniform culture: its culture, *because* it is uniform, will be a mediocre one.

The term "British culture" means something to me: it is what the English, the Scottish and the Welsh have in common. The term "European culture" means something to me, in the same way: it is what the various nations of Europe have in common. Now, so far as "British culture" exists, it means that each part has benefited by its contact with the others. *English* culture is not the same thing that it would have been, but for centuries of close association with Scotland and Wales: on the whole, I think it is a higher culture than it would have been in isolation. There are several reasons why England has been, and must be, the senior partner: it is bigger, it has much the largest population, it has larger areas of good soil and mineral resources, and it has a language of greater resources also. And both Scotland and Wales, I think, have played a much larger part in the world at large, through their connection with England, than they would have been able to take without this connection.

I have been talking about this country simply because it is the one I know best. And I have used it as an illustration of the thesis that local culture must be preserved, on the ground that it is not by aiming at a uniform universal culture that we can hope to progress, but through the reciprocal influences of different cultures on each other. But I do not make the mistake of thinking that the patterns of culture-relations within any two countries are the same. The particular balance of cultures which would be ideal within this island, is determined by the circumstances of this island. Every country has its own problem. There is a peculiar relationship when the citizens of a small country need to know one particular language besides their own. A Welsh-speaking Welshman needs to know English, though an Englishman seldom needs to learn Welsh. This means that Welsh culture must have an intimacy of relationship to English culture different from its relation to any other. But a small country may be in a position in which its closest relationship is with *two* others. In that case the majority of its people will probably need to know no language but their own: only élites will need to know a foreign language, and they will need to know two or more. But even the smallest country must have variety of culture within itself, if it is to have a flourishing culture of its own. States of the size of Andorra, San Marino, [and] Monaco, can hardly be said to have a cultural identity. The exception, in Europe, is perhaps Iceland. I do not know: but I should think that Iceland needed the cultural relation with the other Scandinavian countries, which Ireland needs with Britain – a relationship involving a certain dependence, but by no means incompatible with cultural integrity and political freedom.

I wish then, to make clear that the relationship of England, Scotland and Wales is only one of several ways in which the small country may have a functional part in the culture of Europe. The fact that they possess a common culture gives them together a more important function than each could perform separately: but this British culture would not be of such value to Europe, if it was not itself composed of at least three different cultures. Certainly, for some centuries past, you cannot discuss the contribution of one of these three countries to Europe – England, Scotland and Wales – without reference to the contribution of the other two. Now in Spain also you find a nation with at least three distinct cultures: the Castilian, the Catalan and the Basque. I have no doubt that to the inhabitants of Spain there are many more divisions that appear important: but a foreigner, who does not know the country, may be pardoned if he limits his attention to those differences which are represented by three distinct linguistic traditions. The problem of cultural unity, like the political, economic and religious problems, is very different from that of Britain, just as the function of Spain in Europe is very different. But I think we can say that the function of Catalan or Basque culture, in Europe as a whole, is not direct. We other Europeans are aware that Spain has made a difference to us, in European history, but we are not aware of any direct difference that Catalonia or Vizcaya has meant in our own past, apart from Spain as a whole.

So we may say that some cultures have a direct function among a local group, and that it is as a group of cultures that they have a direct function in Europe. But there are other small countries which are in quite a different position: Holland, for instance, has held a position in Europe which does not depend upon her being closely associated with any one other country. It may be the function, either of a single country like Holland, or of a group of countries of closely related culture such as the Scandinavian states, to hold an intermediate position between two sharply different cultures. This does not mean that their own culture is merely a composite of features of those two: Scandinavian culture is quite distinct from British and German, yet it is I think more sympathetic to both British and German, than either British or German to each other.

At this point I should say something about the importance of language. From the point of view of efficiency, it might seem as if we should find things much easier if we all spoke the same native language. This will never happen, because we shall never agree as to which language to choose; and even if we did, it would only make mutual understanding more difficult, because we should tend to use the same words and mean different things by them without knowing it – there is enough of that already. But people often wonder whether it would not be a good thing if languages – especially rather difficult languages – which are only spoken by a small number of people should disappear. And on the other hand, there are those who think it would be a grand thing if English, for example, became the "second" language of everybody. I do not want either of these things to happen. As for the small languages, the literature of which can affect Europe only through translations, the question should not be "is this language worth preserving?" but "is the culture of the people who speak it worth preserving?" I revert to the case of Welsh. Welsh is not of use, even to Welshmen, for every purpose. A Welsh scientist, for instance, must work and think in English, simply because there has been a tradition of scientific thinking in English which has made that language a better vehicle for scientific thought. And superficially it would appear as if the contribution of the Welsh to literature and poetry could be greater if they wrote only in English: for the Welsh poets who write in English are accessible to an immensely larger number of readers. But it must be considered, that for the transmission of a culture – which involves a particular way of thinking and feeling – there is nothing more reliable than a language belonging to that culture. We have to consider, that if Welsh ceased to be cultivated as a literary language, the Welsh would become less Welsh, and those of their poets who write in English would cease to make the contribution which they do make to English poetry. I am not, certainly, in favour of attempting to revive a language which is nearly dead. By the time that it is preserved only among a few country peasantry, the culture which it represents is unlikely to be more than a mutilated relic. But when a country has preserved its culture, and when that culture has a significance for the rest of Europe – as every living culture has – then I think it should cling to its language. So, I do not wish to see Welsh disappear, simply because I think that it is of value to England, and in relation to England, to the rest of Europe, that the Welsh should continue to be Welsh.

My conception, or ideal, of Europe as an organic unity of cultures, each one of which will itself be an organic unity of cultures, a Europe in which each village will have a different character from the next village, is one which I think would make for peace. I admit that the difference of culture within one country can reach the point of civil war: even when it is not itself the direct cause of civil war, it can fearfully exacerbate the passions of civil war when they are once released; and a civil war in one country becomes a malady affecting the whole of Europe. The truth is that we do not want unity or diversity alone; we want them together. Which is the country that has aimed the most deliberately at complete unification and uniformity, at not only economic but cultural autarchy? It is certainly

Germany: its rulers have aimed at a society which should be an elaborate machine of perfectly fitting and well-oiled parts. A country so unified is of course a danger to its neighbours, and indeed that is what the unity is designed for. Every nation should have a certain degree of friction between its own parts. If Britain is a peaceable nation, as I think it is, that is partly because of the degree of antipathy which exists between English, Welsh and Scots – an antipathy which, according to the design of Providence, finds a proper outlet in the relatively harmless ferocity of football matches. It is wholesome even that inhabitants of neighbouring villages in the same county should continue to regard each other with a certain suspicion. But when the individual no longer regarded himself primarily as a member of a family, second as a citizen of a town or village, then as belonging to a particular county, finally as Englishman or Scot or Welshman, but simply regarded himself as a Briton – and by that time you could not tell from his speech what part of the island he came from – if such a situation came about in this island, then would be the time for other countries to take warning.

This diversity of culture within a nation is not only some safeguard against its becoming aggressive: it is a condition of the culture of that country remaining *alive*, of its continuing to remain creative. As individuals, we may reflect upon the extent to which we have developed in the way we have, because of the persons whom we have known in the course of our lives. If we had met only people who were wholly congenial, if we had come in contact only with ideas which we could accept, how much we should have missed! Perhaps we owe as much to the clashes of personality, as to the sympathies: fortunate the man who, at the right moment, meets the right friend. Fortunate also the man who at the right moment meets the right enemy. I am not suggesting that the enemy should be exterminated: nothing fruitful for culture comes from that – the tendency to exterminate enemies, and liquidate inconvenient factions or classes, is one of the most alarming things about modern conflict, and one of the most fatal for culture. And just as a nation needs diversity of culture within itself, so also it needs unrestricted intercourse with other nations: cultural influences are not a matter to be controlled by governments. They are transmitted by individual thinkers, scientists and artists, who must be free to travel where they will, and mingle with, and study the work of, foreign thinkers, scientists and artists, as they please. How, if not through such free exposure to mutual influence of the élites, can a common European culture flourish?

I have considered here only the area of Europe, and Britain as one of its organic parts. This is the area of first importance for us; and I think we shall agree that unless there can be harmony in Europe, it is useless to consider the hope of harmony in the world as a whole. None of us feels that he needs an explanation of what the culture of his own country means; and for all of us, I trust, there is some meaning in the phrase "European culture," the sources of which have been given, by Christopher Dawson, as (1) the Christian religion, (2) the humanist culture, (3) the tradition of law, and (4) the principle of nationality.[5] But it is as well to have the total problem at the back of our minds, because the world problem has complexities which are not apparent from a study of Europe alone; and we may be in danger, otherwise, of assuming that we can have a wholly self-contained Europe. We are familiar with grandiose schemes for a universal politico-economic Federation of the World. Looking at the matter from the cultural point of view, we can see that any world unity which meant an identity of culture in every country in every part of the world, is a nightmare of monotony in which all culture would perish. The ideal, which, however unattainable it may be, has still the value of an ideal, is only conceivable as a harmony of cultures each of which would remain as original and distinct as it is to-day. We can see such a harmony, however imperfect, within an individual nation; we can still more imperfectly and vaguely see it in Europe; and from this we can conceive the idea, though we cannot imagine or picture the reality, of a culture of the world. In itself, it would not necessarily lead to an age of complete peace: but it would render obsolete the war between culture and culture.

Obviously, the world problem differs from the European problem, in that we cannot formulate in the same way as we have just done for Europe what all the world has in common. And the world problem has two elements which are not found in Europe. It involves, besides our relation with Asia, the relation between the superior and the inferior cultures, as in Africa and the South Seas. This may he called the *colonial* problem. It also involves the relation between Europe and the lands which have been colonised from Europe, in relation to which, peculiar forms of culture-sympathy and culture-clash appear, different in kind from those among the individual European countries. It is obvious, therefore, that we cannot proceed straight from the European problem to the world problem; and, on the other hand, we cannot expect to settle the European problem wholly without reference to what is going on elsewhere, for world relations exist already, and affect the lives of all of us.

I will revert to what I said at the beginning, about the inter-relations of the political, the economic and the cultural elements. All three affect each other, and all three must be satisfactory for two or more nations to get along harmoniously. The first, and increasingly the second, are matters with which governments can concern themselves; and because they are more nearly intellectual problems, we sometimes tend to think of them as the most important. So they are, from day to day, but the cultural aspect is the most important in the long run, for it may be finally a cultural relation which decides whether a conflict turns to active hostility, or is settled by compromise and adjustment. In the last few years, to be sure, it has come to seem more important, or at least is more in the consciousness, of those who control the course of nations: but rather in the limited sense of a separate department of relations. The important thing is, that while political and economic relations can be determined by governments, cultural relations must at some point be left to themselves: for, as I said, they cannot be *constructed*, they have to be left to *grow*. The growth of a plant, of course, can be forwarded by a wise gardener, or checked by a foolish one; though there are always conditions of soil and of climate, and caprices of weather, which are beyond the gardener's control; and not every plant will flourish in every situation and in every climate. So the chief concern of governments, as of gardeners, is to dispose of impediments to natural growth – to reduce pests, to supply water in time of drought, to replenish the soil. It is, by the way, very much to my point, that investigations of agricultural scientists in recent years tend towards getting us back to a more *natural* form of cultivation. It is pretty widely maintained, for instance, that artificial, chemical fertilisers have only a very limited value; that their abuse adds to the spread of diseases among both plants and animals; and that when the land receives its natural return of manure and decaying vegetation instead of chemicals, it produces healthy plants which do not need to be sprayed with other chemicals to rid them of blight and insects. I have no experience of such matters; but agriculture seems to me to provide an interesting analogy to *culture*. In this matter, government can only assist nature. It would be helpful, I think, if those concerned with the political and the economic problems would devote some study to this subject, not for the purpose of tampering with it directly, but in order that they might be more aware of the extent to which cultural relations may affect politics and economics for better or worse, and of the extent to which political and economic arrangements may have, for better or worse, an influence upon the culture of their countries and the cultural relations between their several countries. But as for cultural relations, the important thing is that there should be as much freedom as possible: freedom to find out for ourselves, individually, about other countries, freedom to read each other's books, freedom to travel, and to make friends with those people in other countries who have the same interests as ourselves.[6]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *Review-45*, published in London, was an international quarterly edited by the Czechoslovak writers Walter Berger and Pavel Tigrid. The journal sought "to show the Czech contribution to European culture [and] to formulate a new outlook on the relations between nations."

TSE finished writing this address around 9 Apr 1945 and delivered it at the Czecho-Slovak Institute in London between 19 and 21 Apr in a program arranged by Hazel Eardley-Wilmot of the British Council. On 17 Apr, shortly before delivering his lecture, TSE responded to an appeal from the ailing Middleton Murry for an article for the *Adelphi*: "I have in hand a paper dealing with regionalism and small nations which I am to read to the Czechoslovaks next week. They have already asked me for it to publish in the magazine they still produce here in England. There is no reason why you should not have that too . . . because so few people will see the Czechs' own paper, but I feel that they ought to be allowed to publish it first before I do anything else with it." Murry reprinted the piece in the *Adelphi* of July/Sept 1946 (149-58).

Much of the lecture's argument presages the third chapter of *NTDC*, titled "Unity and Diversity: The Region." As TSE told Allen Tate on 26 Mar: "I am putting together, for an address to some of the Czechs before they leave London, some bits about regional culture pieced together, and simplified, from the book I am trying to write."

2. TSE distinguishes here between the Scottish Gaelic language of the Highlands and Islands and the Scots of the Lowlands.

3. Linguists generally held the Cornish language to have been extinct since the late eighteenth century, though this conclusion was and is disputed. The Breton language of Brittany is a close relative, and both are related, though more distantly, to Welsh. These Brittonic languages are much further removed from the Goidelic languages, such as Scottish and Irish Gaelic, though all belong to the Celtic branch of the Indo-European family.

4. The names "East Anglia" (originally "Ēast Engla Rīce," or East Angle Kingdom) and "Wessex" (originally "Westseaxna Rīce," or West Saxon Kingdom) identify the early medieval settlers of these regions.

5. Dawson's writing includes more than one list of this kind, which TSE may be synthesizing. In *The Modern Dilemma: The Problem of European Unity* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), Dawson identifies "four main traditions that have gone to the making of European culture and that distinguish it from every other civilization that the world has seen"; these are (1) "the Christian tradition," (2) "the humanitarian tradition," (3) "the scientific tradition," and (4) "a distinctly political tradition," which "has inherited from the Graeco-Roman world the classical conceptions of law and citizenship and political freedom" (47-50). In "Europe and Christendom," an article published in the *Dublin Review*, 209 (Oct 1941), Dawson explains that "European

culture is made up of four constituent elements – *civitas, imperium, ecclesia, gentes* – and the various national cultures of the present day represent different combinations of the first three elements on a substratum of barbaric or semi-barbaric society" (109-19; here 111).

6. After delivering this address, TSE had second thoughts about his offer to the *Adelphi*. On 3 May, he told Murry, "on re-reading it I feel that there is too much in it which is designed for a somewhat simple audience of foreigners and would appear rather fatuous addressed to Britons." In the end, however, he did allow Murry to reprint it.

The Social Function of Poetry[1]

The Adelphi, 21 (July/Sept 1945) 152-61

I am very glad that this title[2*] – *le rôle social des poètes* – was suggested to me, because I want to make a slight change in it; for the change of title gives me a pretext for something I want to say. I shall call this talk "le rôle social de la poésie." What difference does this make? It makes no direct difference, but an indirect difference of some significance. I accept the term "poet" only as a convenient designation for this, that or the other person who has written one or more good poems. I have known a good many poets, including some very good ones: but I cannot think of anything in common between them all except the fact that they have all written poems. It is true that most of them also take an interest in poetry; but a good many other people, who do not write, are also interested in poetry. I have known young men whose aspiration was "to be a poet": this seems to me a dangerous ambition, for it easily becomes the desire to be admired by others, and to be able to admire oneself. A better ambition, I say, is to aspire simply to write a good poem, at the moment when there is a poem that one wants to write. And there is another, allied reason for my preference for the term "poetry." A poet, a particular individual, may have more social rôles than one. He is not writing poetry all the time; and there is no reason why he should not have some other function and perform it quite well; on the other hand there is no reason why he should have another function, if he is not obliged to and does not want to. He is a citizen and may be a father: as such he has the same functions as other citizens and fathers. But as a poet his function is to write poetry: and it is therefore with the social rôle of poetry that we are concerned.

The shift of attention, from the poet to the poetry, also enables us to dismiss two special kinds of "social rôle" which might distract our attention. The first is the historical rôle which has been performed by particular *kinds* of poetry. There are primitive runes and chants, in metrical form and of poetic merit, which had very practical magical purposes: to avert the evil eye, to cure some disease, or to propitiate some divinity; and such forms of poem may be said to have had a definite social rôle in primitive society. Poetry was early associated with religious ritual; and in the hymn, the sequence, the litany, we are still using poetry for a social purpose. Early forms of epic and saga transmitted what was held to be history: and, apart from its emotional effect upon the audience the assistance of a verse form to primitive story tellers in helping them to commit to memory immense quantities of matter, was very considerable. And in more advanced societies, such as that of ancient Greece, the recognised social functions of poetry are very conspicuous. The drama was part of a public celebration of religious origin; the pindaric ode developed in relation to a particular kind of social occasion.[3] We can still say that the *lyric* – the poem written to be sung to music, whether by a group of people together, or by one singer to an audience, and the poetic drama, are forms of poetry which have a peculiar social rôle, different from that of poetry which is primarily intended for the reading of one person in solitude.

Now, it should be obvious that with the *song* and with the *drama* we have to do with two *special* functions of poetry. In the former, you have a special kind of poetry combined with a special kind of music, and both the poet and the musician are working within certain limits. Poetry to be sung must be a very simplified poetry: and in the opera it can hardly afford to be more than competent verse. In any kind of verse to be sung the rôle of the poet is quite secondary to that of the composer. The situation in the writing of dramatic verse is rather different, because the poet can, at moments, take precedence over the dramatist, but chiefly because the poet and the dramatist, in a verse play, are the same person. But the poet who sets out to write a play must try to be, first and always, a dramatist. It is to dramatic laws that he owes obedience; and in so far as he succeeds in conforming to the necessities of drama, he will find himself writing a different kind of poetry. For it is poetry written not for his own voice, but for the voice of an unknown interpreter, and poetry which must make an immediate and collective effect upon a mixed group of listeners, none of whom may be assumed to have read the text before hearing it. In the song and in the drama we have two forms of poetry, each with an important social function: but with these, we have to do with a double rôle, the co-operation of poet and composer in a common function, or the subordination of the poet as poet to the poet as dramatist. Yet in both, our appreciation is enhanced by analytical study: a fine lyric, or a great poetic play, is better enjoyed if we have not only heard it performed in public, but read it in private: so that the function of the lyric or the play appears to be in part the same as that of any other kind of poetry. We cannot, that is, say that the social function of poetry, or the rôle of the poet, is exhibited only in poetry which has to be performed in public.

Let us next consider the rôle of the poet, and the function of poetry, in relation to the *purpose* of the poet himself. It very often happens that the poet wishes to propagate some doctrine, religious, philosophical, or social; to provoke his readers to some particular attitude or course of action; to inculcate some moral lesson; or even to convey information. These are by no means recent applications: in fact, it is the opposite view, that art should serve no end beyond itself, which is the more modern. It was indeed a commonplace amongst Renaissance critics that poetry should inspire men to moral virtue. And there is no question that some of the greatest poets have had very definite purposes. They have not dissimulated them; their poems would be meaningless without them. Here, I think, we must avoid being seduced into one or the other of two extreme opinions. The first is, that it is simply the value of the *ideas* expressed in a poem which gives the value to the poetry; or that it is the *truth* of his view of life – by which we ordinarily mean its congruity with our own view – that matters. The other is, that the ideas, the beliefs of the poet do not matter at all; that they are rather like some alloy, necessary for the poet in order to manipulate his true material, which is refined out of the poetry in the course of time. To arrive at what seems to me the more correct view, we may consider first, that when a poet has expressed successfully a philosophy we find that it is a philosophy which is already in existence, not one of his own invention; when he has made a successful poem which conveys information, the facts are not of his own discovery. As examples of the first, we may take Lucretius or Dante: they both drew their material from the work of philosophers who were not poets. As an example of the second, we may take Virgil in his *Georgics*: he was not aiming to popularise a wholly new and revolutionary theory of farming, but rather to preserve and unify the principles which had been practised by good farmers before his time. And this leads me to conclude, that these poems were not designed to persuade the readers to an intellectual assent, but to convey an emotional equivalent for the ideas. What Lucretius and Dante teach you, in fact, is *what it feels like* to hold certain beliefs; what Virgil teaches you, is to feel yourself inside the agrarian life. The poem may persuade some readers to accept the ideas, by the association of the idea with emotion which the reader enjoys experiencing. But the purpose of Dante, I should say, was not so much to persuade readers to give intellectual assent to the Christian cosmogony, as to make readers, who already accepted that cosmogony, or who at least were not prepared to deny it, *feel* it as a matter of personal experience.

I see no reason why future poets should not set themselves a similar task. But I believe it to be a condition of success, that the view of life which they attempt to express in poetry, should be one which is already accepted. I do not think you can make poetry out of ideas when they are too *original*, or too *new*. The poet himself must already have lived them, and lived them communally. For the business of a poet is to express the culture in which he lives, and to which he belongs, not to express aspiration towards one which is not yet incarnate.

This is not, of course, meant to imply that the poet has to approve the society in which he lives: to express an actual culture, and to approve a social situation, are two quite different things. This expression of his culture, indeed, may set the poet into violent opposition to a social situation which violates that culture.

I say that I think it is the business of the poet to express, and to criticise, the culture in which he lives and to which he belongs. But what it is the task of the poet to do, is always something more than, and can be something very different from his conscious purpose. That the purpose of a poet, what he sets out to do and what he thinks he is doing, is relevant to the understanding of his poetry I do not deny; nor do I deny that when he has a conscious purpose, it may be one which can be greatly to the advantage, or alternatively to the detriment of his poetry. I only say that the function of his poetry cannot be judged by his purpose. I can best make clear what I mean by this, by reference to a vast body of literature to which students of aesthetics and psychology might perhaps pay more attention: I mean *bad* poetry. Here, I must distinguish first between the *true* bad poet and the *false* bad poet. By the latter, I mean every person (and that is perhaps the majority of people who have received some rudiments of literary education) who is moved at some moment of adolescence to express himself in verse and who for a brief period cherishes the illusion that what he has written is poetry. The true bad poet is a person of perseverance and industry, who goes on writing, after this adolescent crisis has been passed, to the end of his life. He devotes himself to writing bad poetry: it is his vocation. He is a person of some talent. But there are two types of true bad poet. The first is a lover of words; he has nothing to say that has not already been said, but he thinks that originality consists in expressing the commonplace sentiment in a slightly unusual syntax, metric, and vocabulary. I knew one such poet, a very intelligent and charming man, who made one great discovery: that by placing a comma, not at the end of the line, but at the beginning of the next line, he could achieve a certain appearance of originality. The other type of bad poet is not a virtuoso; he has found a serious purpose; he has a message to convey. This type of bad poet is apt to run to very long poems, even to the epic. He usually keeps to a well-tried vocabulary and long approved metre; he aims at the sublime rather than the eccentric. He has a religious, or a philosophical, or a political turn of mind; and his poetry is the vehicle of a message which he is sure is of importance to the world. He has social purpose: and he has nothing else.[4]

I find that, in reading the work of a *good* poet, I am apt to be struck by a certain ambiguity. At moments I feel that his language is merely the perfect instrument for what he has to say; at other moments I feel that he is simply making use of, even exploiting, his beliefs for the sake of the verbal beauty in which he can express them. He appears to be both inside and outside of his beliefs and interests. Where this doubt about the attitude of the poet cannot arise, one is tempted to suspect the poetry. If we can enjoy the form while indifferent to the content, that poetry is for us mere virtuosity; if we can attend to the ideas and be indifferent to the words in which they are expressed, what we are reading is for us merely bad prose.

It is necessary, certainly, that the poet should have other interests besides writing poetry. And he should be interested in other subjects for their own sake. Just as it is a mistake to seek for any kind of experience, for the purpose of making poetry out of it, so we should not pursue any subject of knowledge, scientific, historical, or philosophical, for the sake of having something to write about. We cannot simply *use* poetry to express our thought or feeling, and we cannot simply seek for knowledge or experience, for the sake of writing poetry. Those whom we call the great poets, have usually been men of wide interests; but the condition of their being poets at all, is that their learning and thought, as well as their experience of men and actions, should have been assimilated by their sensibility. And for this to happen, the experience must come on its own terms, the intellectual study must be pursued for its own sake.

If I am right, then a great deal more goes to the making of poetry than the conscious purpose of the poet; and, if this is so, the poet's social rôle also is more than, and other than, any conscious social purpose on his part. The poet may, or may not, have a deliberate intention to teach or to persuade. It is easy to see that Virgil had a particular attitude towards the Roman people, the Roman City, the Roman Empire, to communicate to his audience in the *Aeneid*; that Dante, and Milton in a different way, were aiming to teach a particular theology, in their more abstract passages, and to make this theology real to their readers, in their descriptions of scenes, events, and characters: and the effect of their poetry upon contemporary readers may be assumed to have been very close to their intentions. But with the passage of time, their poetry reveals new and different significance. And with other poets, also of the first rank, it is not always easy to see what their conscious purpose was, or whether they had any, or whether it matters. Even with the Greek dramatists, did the poet really hope or intend to benefit his audience by precept or example? And did Racine create Roxane in order to warn society against the dangers of uncontrolled passion;[5] or did Shakespeare create Lear as a warning against the self-deceptions of senile vanity?

It is obvious that any attempt to define the function of poetry in terms of the purpose of the poet, is to involve ourselves in a labyrinth from which there is no extrication. All we can say is that when a poet has had a clear and distinct purpose, this purpose appears to have been a necessary condition of his writing the poetry: his purpose was useful to him. And when he has had such a purpose, we have to take account of it, whether we sympathise with it or not, in order fully to appreciate his poetry; and this is as true when his poem has to do with affairs two thousand years ago as when it deals with affairs contemporary with ourselves. The direct social value of poetry was much in the minds of critics and theorists of the Renaissance, for whom every notable man of antiquity was an example to be imitated or avoided, as the illustration of some virtue or vice described by Aristotle. Later moralists have been less naive, but also more vague. And in recent times, a reason why we have become more cautious in accepting a poet's expressed intention as evidence of what he was really doing, is that we have all become more conscious of the rôle of the unconscious.

If we are to discover the social rôle of poetry, we must find out what it does everywhere, at all times and in all languages. We must avoid considering the various functions which some poetry has performed, at some times and in some places, and the different rôles which particular poets have filled or tried to fill. We must also avoid imposing a new rôle upon poetry; we must not say, "this is what poetry *ought* to do" unless it is something which all good poetry has always done. So let us begin with its most obvious test of excellence. First of all, it must give pleasure. If anyone asks "what sort of pleasure?" I can only say "the sort of pleasure that good poetry can give"; and if anyone asks "to whom should it give pleasure?" I can only say "to those people who appreciate poetry." For any other answer would immediately take us into speculations about aesthetics, for which I have neither the competence nor the interest. Of course one may read poetry for other reasons, without enjoying it as poetry. You may read the work of a poet in order to gain an understanding of his period of history; but he would not be important enough to reward such investigation, unless a number of people had in his own time enjoyed reading his poetry. Even if you set yourself to read the work of bad poets of the past, it will probably be to find out why people ever thought them good poets. It is obvious that a poem which has never given any pleasure to anyone but the author, can have no social function at all.

This statement of the obvious raises the question, whether the social rôle of a poet is greater than another's if his work has given pleasure to more people. It sometimes happens that a poet has been read and enjoyed in his own generation by a vast number of people, and now has no readers at all; while another poet may have been read with enjoyment only by a few people at any time, but continues, throughout the centuries, to give pleasure to a few people in every generation. I do not think that we should say that the social rôle of the first was greater than that of the second. Shall we not say, that the second poet's work has *permanence*, and that the work of the former was a temporary fashion – and that the permanent has the greater social value? I think we do feel that a poem must continue to please readers in every generation, or at least must have the power of giving fresh pleasure after a period of neglect, so long as there are readers who can understand the language in which it is written.

With this qualification, it is nevertheless generally true that the greatest poets are those who have given the most pleasure to the largest number, and the greatest *variety*, of human beings, throughout the period of time since they wrote. And, in general, I am also taking account of a poet's public in foreign countries through translations of his work. There are, of course, several sorts of poetry for which translation is justified. There is poetry in which visual imagery dominates, and which therefore can convey some of its effect in any language. There may be the poetry of a poet whose temperament has an affinity with the spirit of some language not his own; conversely, there is poetry which finds a translator whose temperament has an affinity to that of the author. And lastly, there is the most *universal* poetry, which, however much it may lose in translation, retains much that can be read with pleasure and advantage in a foreign language. But even the greatest poets, the men of undoubted international or universal importance, are also local: indeed, they may be more profoundly local, for their own people and their own language, than smaller poets whose work can be only locally appreciated. Every poet has a significance for his own people that he cannot have for others; and a poet must be a great poet for his own people, if he is to be also a great European, or a great universal poet.

We observe that poetry differs from the other arts, in that it has a value for people of the poet's race, country and language, which it cannot have for others. It is true that music and painting have also local characters; and that a piece of music, or a painting, may communicate something to the artist's compatriots which a foreigner will miss. But, at least within the circle of European culture, a good critic can form a sound opinion of the merit of foreign works of art: there are at least common laws of construction, common standards of technical mastery. And of all the forms of art for which language is used – the theatre, the novel, the prose work of every kind – poetry is the most indissoluble from its language. With poetry alone, we can never feel *quite* certain of our judgement, without the support of critics who belong to the same country and the same language. And if the poet is more dependent upon his particular language than other artists, or even other writers, so I may be allowed to conclude that that language is more dependent upon the poet than upon men of any other profession. And this leads me at last to what I believe to be *the* social rôle of the poet. I think that it is important for every language, if that language is to be worth preserving, to have its own poetry – not simply for those who enjoy reading poetry, but for the sake of the people as a whole. I think that the existence of a national literature – and I rank poetry as the most indispensable part of literature – makes a difference, not only to those who enjoy poetry, but to everybody; even to those who hardly know the names of their greatest national poets; even, I might also say, to the wholly illiterate. So it is through his service to people who do not read his poetry, that I assign to the poet his greatest *social* rôle.

We observe that the impulse towards the literary use of the vernacular begins in poetry: it was in poetry that the modern languages of Europe first exercised themselves, while Latin was still the language of learning and prose. This appears to be inevitable, when we recognise that poetry, however intellectual, has to do with the expression of feeling and emotion; that feeling and emotion are experienced in the language of daily life; and that feeling and emotion are particular, while thought is general. It is easier to *think* in a foreign tongue, than to *feel* in it. No art is more stubbornly national than poetry. A people may have its language taken away from it, suppressed in public use, and forbidden in its schools; but unless you teach that people to *feel* in a new language you have not eradicated the old one, and it will re-affirm itself first of all in poetry. And when I speak of *feeling* in another language, I mean something more radical than merely "expressing one's feelings in another language." A thought expressed in another language may be practically the same thought; but a feeling expressed in a different language cannot be quite the same feeling. For emotion, poetry is a more *precise* medium than prose. One of the reasons for trying to learn a foreign language is that it gives us a kind of supplementary personality: one of the reasons for not acquiring another language to use instead of our own is that hardly anybody really wants to become a different person. The extermination of a superior language is the extermination of a superior people.

Emotion and feeling, then, can only be fully expressed in the vernacular language which a particular people has fashioned for itself through many generations, and which, in its turn, has gone to fashion the mode of feeling of its people. It must be fundamentally the language of all classes of that people: the structure, the rhythms, the sounds, the idioms of a language express the personality of the race that speaks it. When I say that it is poetry rather than prose which is concerned with the analysis and definition of emotion and feeling, I do not ignore, on the one hand, the intellectual content of poetry, or on the other, the emotional qualities of prose. Sensibility and intellect are not separable in the individual, nor are they in the language he speaks. I am merely stressing specific characteristics. And I do not admit that poetry, in order to have a social function, must limit itself to the expression of feeling which *everybody* can recognise and understand and share. We must not limit poetry to popular poetry. It is enough, in a healthy and homogeneous civilization, that the feelings of the most refined and complex individuals have something in common with those of the crudest and least educated, which they do not share with persons of their own level of culture who speak another language. It is true, I believe, that in a healthy society, the really great poet should be understood in part, and responded to, by compatriots of the humblest, as well as by those of the highest level of culture. But his most *general* social rôle will be in relation, not to his readers, but to his language as spoken by everyone.

We may say, then, that just as the first duty of a man *qua* citizen is to his country, so his first duty *qua* poet is to the language of his country. First, he has the duty to *preserve* that language: his use of it must not weaken, coarsen, or degrade it. Second, he has the duty to *develop* that language, to bring it up to date, to investigate its unexplored possibilities. So far as he expresses, in his poetry, what other people feel, he is also affecting that feeling by making it more conscious: in giving people words for their feelings, he is teaching them something about themselves. But he is not merely more conscious than others; he is also different from them, and different from other poets, and can therefore give his readers knowledge of feelings which they have never experienced. That is the difference between the writer who is merely eccentric or grotesque, and the genuine poet: the former may have feelings which are unique, but which cannot be shared, or are not worth sharing, and which are therefore socially useless; while the genuine poet discovers new shades and variations of sensibility in which others can participate. And in expressing them, he is developing and enriching the language, for the ultimate advantage of a public far wider than his circle of readers.

I have said enough about the differences of feeling of different peoples as expressed by their several languages. But people experience life differently not only in different places and different languages: the same people experience it differently at different times. Our sensibility differs from that of the Chinese or the Hindu; but also, it is not the same as that of our ancestors of a few centuries ago. It is not even quite the same as that of our parents; indeed, we ourselves are not unchanged in the course of a lifetime. This is obvious; what is not quite so obvious is that this is the reason why no people can afford to *stop* producing poetry. Most men take a certain pride in the great authors of their language and country, though they may never have read them; they are proud of them as of any other distinction of their country. A few authors even become celebrated enough to be cited occasionally by political orators. But most people do not realise that this is not enough – to have great writers of the past; that, unless we can go on producing great authors, and especially great poets, our language will deteriorate. Our culture will deteriorate, and in the end may become so weakened that it will yield to an alien and stronger one. And, unless we have always a contemporary literature, we shall ourselves become more and more alien to the literature of our own past. That literature, if it has no living progeny, will become more and more remote from us, until it is hardly more than the literature of another and vanished race. Our language goes on changing whether we want it to or not; our way of life changes under the pressure of every sort of change in our environment. So to cope with these changes we need constantly new poets, men who combine an exceptional sensibility with an exceptional power of words: otherwise our own ability, the ability of a whole people, not merely to express, but even to feel, civilised emotions, will degenerate.

The changes and developments of language operated in every generation by a few authors – authors, perhaps, who in their own time have but a small number of readers – will work themselves into the language gradually, through their influence on other, more popular writers; and by the time their influence has been absorbed, a new advance will be called for. So, in the long run, it makes a difference to the speech, to the sensibility, to the lives of all the members of a society or community, to the whole people: even, as I have said, to those who do not know the names of their poets. The influence of poetry, at its furthest periphery, is of course very diffused, very indirect. To follow it is like following the flight of a bird or an aeroplane in a clear sky; if you have noticed it when it was quite new, and kept your eye on it, you can still see it at a great distance at which the eye of another person will be unable to detect it. So you can find the influence of poetry everywhere, in a healthy society: for in a healthy society there is a constant circulation of influence from each part to the others.

I should not like you to think that I am making an exorbitant claim for poetry, and that I suppose that the language we speak is determined by poets. It is equally true to say that the language of poets is determined by the language which they hear spoken around them. A poet must be dependent upon his language in the state in which he finds it, in his own time and in his own environment. If it is improving, so much the better for him; if it is deteriorating, he must make the best of it. Poetry can do something to preserve, and even restore, the health of a language; it can also help that language to develop, in order that it may be just as subtle, strong, and exact in the more complicated conditions and for the changing purposes of modern life, as it was in an earlier and simpler age. But in that baffling social personality which we call our "culture," the elements depend upon each other; and poetry, like everything else, depends upon a great many influences which are beyond its control.

My emphasis appears to have been upon the national and local functions of poetry. I do not wish this discussion to become confused with the political and economic issues which are suggested by the word *nationality*, or by the more controversial word *nationalism*. But I ought to make clear what I do believe in relation to my subject. I cannot accept the ideal of a general *uniformity* of culture among the several parts, large and small, of Europe; on the other hand, I do not believe that these parts of Europe can flourish in cultural isolation from each other. I should like each part to preserve its individuality. With the extent of political and economic independence necessary for the preservation of this individuality, I am not here concerned. Both unity and diversity are necessary. It seems difficult enough, in the future before us, to achieve any European unity; it seems difficult enough, on the other hand, for each nation to preserve its distinct and traditional culture: what we have to attempt seems more difficult than either, because it is *both*.

As an illustration, in closing: there is much to be said, for certain limited purposes, for the propagation of some universal *lingua franca*, a common "second language" of communication between peoples. But supposing that all communication between those who are foreigners to each other was carried on in an artificial language which was the language of no one in particular, this might be adequate for some purposes, but would be worse than useless for others. Poetry is a constant reminder of all the things which can only be said in one language. The spiritual communication between nation and nation cannot be carried on without the help of those individuals who study each other's languages perseveringly enough to be able to *feel* in a foreign language. The study of another people's poetry is particularly illuminating. When I was very young, before I was able to speak French at all, or even to understand it when spoken, I generally found that I did not understand a piece of prose until I understood it according to the standards of the schoolmaster: that is, I had to be sure of the meaning of every word, grasp the grammar, and then think it in English. But I also found that sometimes a piece of poetry, which I could not have translated, which contained many words unknown to me, and sentences which I could not construe, could yet convey to me something unique, something indefinably different from anything in English, which I could not explain yet which I felt I understood. It was not an illusion: on learning the language better, I found that what I had divined to be in the poetry was really there, as well as much more. So I should like to re-write the story of the tower of Babel as follows: So long as the builders all spoke their several languages, with the assistance of *liaison* officers, all went fairly well. But, disapproving of the privileged position of these officers, and suspicious of their efficiency, they dismissed them. Then, being unable to communicate with each other at all, each group set to work independently, and the results were much less satisfactory. So they invented a new language which was not the language of anybody in particular, and finally the tower collapsed: because, although they were all using the same words, they all attached different meanings to them.[6] Against this revised version of the Tower of Babel, I would set the story of Pentecost, which I do not desire to tamper with: for the various peoples there assembled heard the Apostles, not in Esperanto or Basic English, but each in his own tongue: and what they all heard was the same message.[7]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. A lecture delivered at La Maison des Centraux in rue Jean-Goujon, Paris. Originally scheduled for 8 May 1945, it was postponed to 11 May when, upon the Allied acceptance of Germany's surrender, the 8th was announced as the official Victory in Europe Day. TSE worked on the text approximately 3-9 Apr, immediately after completing "Cultural Diversity and European Unity" (6.625). He composed it in English but delivered it in French during a visit undertaken 5-15 May on behalf of the British Council, which had the text translated for him. On 27 Apr he told Christina Morley that he was "terrified" by the prospect of reading the lecture in French "*sous la présidence de M. Valéry de l'Académie*" [under the chairmanship of M. Valéry of the Académie]. The occasion turned out to be Valéry's last public appearance before his death on 20 July; see TSE's unpublished "Homage to Paul Valéry" (6.653).

Although substantially different from TSE's canonical 1943 lecture of the same title (6.436), this piece does adapt several passages from its predecessor, particularly in its final pages.

2*. TSE's note: "*Le Rôle Social des Poètes*. This is the original text of an address delivered to an audience in Paris in May, 1945." Stationed in Paris, editor George Dillon reported on TSE's lecture in *Poetry*, 67 (Oct 1945):

> People continued to crowd in until forty-five minutes past the scheduled time. Finally Valéry stepped to the platform leading the "bête curieuse," namely Eliot, whom everyone had come to see. After Valéry's introduction, Eliot stood up to acknowledge the applause, then sat down again, in the French fashion, to give his talk. He looked as handsome as ever, apparently unaging. His extraordinarily fine voice has become more effective with the years. He made a few remarks in English, expressing his emotion at being once more, and at such a time, in Paris – Paris "inviolably beautiful" – or rather saying that his feelings could not be expressed, they were too confused and too "personal to myself." Then, mopping his face like the rest of us in that hot place, he proceeded to read his lecture in French. (50)

3. Classical Greek drama was performed at the annual festival honoring the god Dionysus and probably developed out of earlier ritual practices. Pindar's "victory odes" celebrate the achievements of athletes at the Panhellenic Games.

4. In *Poetry*, Dillon wrote, "The part of [TSE's] lecture which the French seemed to enjoy most was his definition of the two kinds of bad poet – the 'faux mauvais,' those who have a spurt of writing poetry in their youth, and the 'vrais mauvais,' those who keep on writing it" (51).

5. In Racine's tragedy *Bajazet* (1672), the unrequited love of the Ottoman sultana Roxane for Bajazet, the sultan's brother, leads her to execute him, and the sultan to execute her.

6. In the original telling, the builders of Babel were all "of one speech" until God "did there confound the language of all the earth" and "scattered them abroad from thence" (Genesis 11:1-9).

7. Acts 2:1-12. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. . . . Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. . . . [W]e do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Esperanto was developed by L. L. Zamenhof as an international language (1887), Basic English by Charles Kay Ogden as a simplified form of English (1930).

Having promised this lecture to Middleton Murry for publication in the *Adelphi*, TSE sent him the text on 3 May 1945 with expressions of reluctance: "I must say that in this form it is not a paper which I should have chosen to submit to you or to anybody else for publication, and I only offer it because the *Adelphi* appears to be in momentary difficulty and I have nothing else." Following its appearance in the *Adelphi*, the Welsh writer Denys Val Baker solicited the essay for an anthology, but on 23 Nov TSE demurred: "I am sorry that I do not feel quite satisfied enough with my 'Social Function of Poetry' in its present form to wish it to appear in any book." He later selected his 1943 lecture of the same title for *OPP* in preference to this version, though he gives the date there as 1945.

Homage to Paul Valéry

Following Valéry's death on 20 July 1945, *Les Lettres françaises* – a weekly literary magazine founded in 1942 as an organ of the French Resistance – telegraphed TSE, requesting a contribution to an "Hommage à Valéry." However, TSE did not receive their telegram till 24 July, and two more days passed before he found time to compose his remarks. On 27 July he discovered that he was already too late, and *Les Lettres françaises* published its homage on the 28th without his contribution. He wrote to the editors on 8 Aug to explain his tardiness, closing: "I enclose a copy of the cable which I drew up and am, of course, very sorry that the delays made it impossible for me to bear witness in this distinguished company." The issue included articles by Georges Duhamel, René Lalou, Louis Parrot, and Léon Degand, as well as shorter tributes – under the headline "Pour un tombeau de Paul Valéry" – by Jean Tardieu, Jean Cassou, André Berne-Joffroy, and Dominique Aury.

Written the evening of 26 July 1945, TSE's telegram is addressed to "*Lettres françaises* / 60 rue Courcelles, Paris."

WHEN I LAST SAW VALERY TWO MONTHS AGO I KNEW MYSELF IN PRESENCE OF A DYING MAN STOP[1] WHETHER HE KNEW THIS HIMSELF I CANNOT SAY STOP HE WAS CONSCIOUSLY FACING DEATH BUT THE DEATH THE FACE OF WHICH HE SAW WAS THE DEATH OF AN EPOCH PARAGRAPH THERE ARE POETS WHO DIE BEFORE THEIR AGE HAS BECOME CONSCIOUS OF THEM AND WHO THEREFORE DIE BEFORE THEIR WORK HAS REACHED ITS SOCIAL REALISATION STOP THERE ARE POETS WHO SURVIVE THEIR EPOCH WHO SUCCEED OR FAIL IN ADAPTING THEMSELVES TO ANOTHER AGE STOP IT IS FITTING THAT VALERY WHO MORE THAN ANY POET IN EUROPE WAS THE POETIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS TIME SHOULD DIE AT SUCH A MOMENT THAT FUTURE WRITERS CAN SPEAK OF THE AGE OF VALERY STOP I AM REMINDED OF CERTAIN PAGES OF PEGUY ON HYPATIA PARAGRAPH[2] IN ENGLAND WE WERE FIRST AWARE OF VALERY AFTER THE LAST WAR WITH LA JEUNE PARQUE STOP[3] HE HAS REMAINED THE MASTER WHO AT THE SAME TIME REPRESENTED OUR AGE AND IN OUR AGE REPRESENTED POETRY NOT ONLY THE POETRY OF FRANCE BUT THE POETRY OF THE EUROPE OF OUR HISTORY AVE ATQUE VALE[4]

THOMAS ELIOT

NOTES

1. In his final public appearance, Paul Valéry served as chair when TSE read "The Social Function of Poetry" in Paris on 11 May (6.639). Although TSE told Christina Morley on 27 Apr that he was "terrified" by the prospect of reading the lecture in French before the eminent poet, his concern shifted during the address itself, and he reported to John Hayward afterward, on 12 May, that he had spoken "in terror lest my chairman, M. Valéry . . . should collapse in the middle of it."

2. The eleventh book in Péguy's *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, 8 (2 Dec 1906), culminates in an encomium on the Alexandrian polymath Hypatia, who flourished in the early fifth century and died, reportedly, the victim of a Christian mob. The passage concludes: "quand tout un monde, quand tout le monde se désaccordait, pour toute la vie temporelle du monde et peut-être pour l'éternité, seule elle sort demeurée accordée jusque dans la mort" [when an entire world, when everyone was in discord, for the temporal duration of the world and perhaps for eternity, she alone remained in harmony even in death] (71).

3. "La Jeune Parque" ("The Young Fate"), Valéry's long poem of 1917, considered a classic of French modernism.

4. "Ave atque vale" [hail and farewell]: the famous closing words of Catullus's Carmen 101.

The Class and the Élite[1*]

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It would seem that among the more primitive societies the higher types exhibit more marked differentiation of function amongst their members than the lower types. At a higher stage still we find that a distinction is made between functions which are more highly and less highly valued, and this distinction leads to the development of *classes*, in which higher honour and higher privilege are accorded to the person not merely as functionary but as member of the class. And the class itself possesses a function, that of maintaining that part of the total culture of the society which pertains to that class. We have to try to keep in mind that in a healthy society this maintenance of a particular level of culture is for the benefit, not merely of the class which maintains it, but of the society as a whole. This awareness will prevent us from falling into the error of supposing that the culture of a "higher" class is something superfluous to society as a whole, or to the majority, or the error of supposing that it is something which ought to be shared equally by all other classes. It should also remind the "higher" class, in so far as any such exists, that the survival of the culture in which it is particularly interested is dependent upon the health of the culture of the people.

That a society thus articulated is not the highest type to which we may aspire, and that it is in the nature of things for a progressive society eventually to overcome these divisions, is now an *idée reçue*. It is also held to be within the power of our conscious direction, and therefore a duty incumbent upon us, to bring about a classless society. But while class, in any sense which maintains associations of the past, is expected to disappear, it is now the opinion of some of the most advanced minds that qualitative distinctions between individuals must still be recognised; and that the superior individuals must be formed into suitable groups, endowed with appropriate powers, and perhaps rewarded with varied emoluments and honours. Those groups which are created out of individuals apt for powers of government and administration will direct the public life of the nation; the individuals composing them will be spoken of – as it is desirable to avoid any suggestion of coercion and repression – as "leaders." There will also be groups concerned with art, and groups concerned with science, and groups concerned with philosophy, as well as groups consisting of men of action: and all these groups will be what are called *élites*.

It is obvious that while in the present state of society there is found the voluntary association of like-minded individuals, and association based upon common material interest, or common occupation or profession, the *élites* of the future will differ in one important respect from any that we know: they will replace the classes of the past, whose positive functions they will assume. This transformation is not always explicitly stated. There are some philosophers who regard class divisions as intolerable, and others who regard them merely as moribund. The latter may simply ignore class, in their design for an *élite*-governed society, and say, as does Mr. F. C. Happold in a book to which I shall refer later, that the *élites* will "be drawn from all sections of society" (what Mr. Happold says is that "they will, to a much greater degree, be drawn from all sections of society," but not all writers add this qualification).[2] But it would seem that, as we perfect the means for identifying at an early age, educating for their future rôle, and settling in position of authority, the individuals who will form the *élites*, all former class distinctions will become a mere shadow, and the only difference of rank will be between the *élites* and the rest of the community, unless, as might happen, there is to be an order of precedence and prestige amongst the several *élites* themselves.

However moderately and unobtrusively the doctrine of *élites* is put, it implies a radical transformation of society. Superficially, it appears to aim at no more than what we must all desire – that all positions in society should be occupied by those who are best fitted to carry out the duties of the positions. We have all observed individuals occupying situations in life for which neither their character nor their intellect qualified them, and so placed only through birth, or nominal education, or family alliance. No honest man but is vexed by such a spectacle. But the doctrine of *élites* implies a good deal more than the correction of such injustice. It implies an *atomic* view of society.

The philosopher whose views on the subject of *élites* deserve the closest attention, both for their own value and because of the influence they exert, is Dr. Karl Mannheim.[3*] It is, for that matter, Dr. Mannheim who has founded the fortunes of the term *élite*. I must remark that Dr. Mannheim's description of culture is different from mine. He says:

> [A] sociological investigation of culture in liberal society must begin with the life of those who create culture, *i.e.* the intelligentsia and their position within society as a whole. [81]

According to the account which I have elsewhere given, a "culture" is conceived as the creation of the society as a whole; being, from another aspect, that which makes it a society. It is not the creation of any one part of that society.[4] The function of what Dr. Mannheim would call the culture-creating groups, according to my account, would be rather to bring about a further development of the culture in organic complexity: culture at a more conscious level, but still the same culture. This higher level of culture must be thought of as valuable both in itself and because of its enrichment of the lower levels: thus the movement of culture would proceed in a kind of cycle as in vegetable nature, the roots imbibing nourishment from the soil, the sap rising through the stem, and the dead leaves falling to earth to feed the soil that feeds the roots.[5]

This is, already, a difference of some importance. My next observation is that Dr. Mannheim is concerned rather with *élites* than with an *élite*. "We may distinguish," he says, "the following types of *élites*":

> the political, the organising, the intellectual, the artistic, the moral, and the religious. Whereas the political and organising *élites* aim at integrating a great number of individual wills, it is the function of the intellectual, esthetic, and moral-religious *élites* to sublimate those psychic energies which society, in the daily struggle for existence, does not fully exhaust. [82-83]

This departmentalisation of *élites* already exists, to some extent; and to some extent it is a necessary and a good thing. But so far as it can be observed to exist, it is not *altogether* a good thing. I have suggested elsewhere that a growing weakness of our culture has been the increasing isolation of *élites* from each other, so that the political, the philosophical, the artistic, the scientific, are separated, to the loss of each of them, not merely through the arrest of any general circulation of ideas, but through the lack of those contacts and mutual influences at a less conscious level, which are perhaps even more important than ideas. The problem of the formation, preservation, and development of the *élites* is therefore also the problem of the formation, preservation, and development of *the élite*, a problem upon which Dr. Mannheim does not touch.

As an introduction to this problem, I must draw attention to another difference between my view and that of Dr. Mannheim. He observes, in a passage which I think contains a profound truth:

> The crisis of culture in liberal-democratic society is due, in the first place, to the fact that the fundamental social processes, which previously favoured the development of the culturally creative *élites*, now have the opposite effect, i.e. have become obstacles to the forming of *élites* because wider sections of the population take an active part in cultural activities. [85]

I cannot, of course, admit the last clause of this sentence as it stands. According to my view of culture, the *whole* of the population should "take an active part in cultural activities" – but not all in the same activities or on the same level. What this clause means, in my terms, is that an increasing proportion of the population is concerned with the level of culture produced and transmitted by the superior minority. This comes about, I think Dr. Mannheim would agree, through the gradual alteration of the class-structure. But at this point it seems to me that Dr. Mannheim begins to confuse *élite* with *class*. For he says:

> If one calls to mind the essential forms of selecting *élites* which up to the present have appeared on the historical scene, three principles can be distinguished: selection on the basis of *blood*, *property*, and *achievement*. Aristocratic society, especially after it had entrenched itself, chose its *élites* primarily on the blood principle. Bourgeois society gradually introduced, as a supplement, the principle of wealth, a principle which also obtained for the intellectual *élite*, inasmuch as education was more or less available only to the offspring of the well-to-do. It is, of course, true that the principle of achievement was combined with the two other principles in earlier periods, but it is the important contribution of modern democracy as long as it is rigorous that the achievement principle increasingly tends to become the criterion of social success. [89]

I am ready to accept, in a rough-and-ready way, this account of three historical periods. But I would remark that we are here not concerned with *élites* but with classes, or with the evolution from a class to a classless society. It seems to me that even at the stage of the sharpest division into classes we can distinguish an *élite* also. Are we to believe that the artists of the Middle Ages were all men of noble rank, or that the hierarchy and the statesmen were all selected according to their pedigrees?

I do not think that this is what Dr. Mannheim wishes us to believe; but I think that he is confusing the *élites* with the dominant section of society which the *élites* served, from which they took their colour, and into which some of their individual members were recruited. His general scheme of the transition of society, in the last five hundred years or so, is usually accepted, and I have no interest in questioning it. I would only propose one qualification. At the stage of dominance of *bourgeois* society (I think it would be better to say, for this country, "upper-middle-class society") there is a difference applying particularly to England. However powerful it was – for its power is now commonly said to be passing – upper-middle-class society would not have been what it was without the existence of a class above it – a class, however vestigial, from which it drew some of its ideals and some of its criteria, and to the condition of which its more ambitious members aspired. There has been no stage of purely "bourgeois society" in this country.[6]

I now come to another passage in Dr. Mannheim's discussion, which seems to me profoundly true. His intellectual integrity prevents him from dissimulating the gloom of our present position; yet he succeeds, so far as I can judge, in communicating to most of his readers a feeling of active hopefulness by infecting them with his own passionate faith in the possibilities of "planning." The limitations of "planning" are not part of my concern in the immediate context; and indeed involve metaphysical as well as psychological speculations about human consciousness, which would plunge us into very deep waters indeed. I am here engaged with his diagnosis.[7]

> We have no clear idea how the selection of *élites* would work in an open mass-society in which only the principle of achievement mattered. It is possible that in such a society the succession of the *élites* would take place much too rapidly and social continuity which is essentially due to the slow and gradual broadening of the influence of the dominant groups would be lacking in it.[8]* [91]

This raises a problem, of the first importance to my present discussion, with which I do not think Dr. Mannheim has yet dealt in any detail: that of the *transmission of culture*.

When we are concerned with the history of certain parts of culture such as the history of art, or of literature, or of philosophy, we naturally isolate a particular class of phenomena. There has been a movement, which has produced books of interest and value, to relate these subjects more closely to a general social history; but even such accounts are usually only the history of one class of phenomena interpreted in the light of the history of another class of phenomena, and, like that of Dr. Mannheim, tend to take a more limited view of culture than that adopted here. What we have to consider is the part played by the *élite* and that played by the class in the transmission of culture from one generation to the next.

We must remind ourselves of the danger, mentioned in the previous chapter,[9] of identifying culture with the sum of distinct cultural activities; and if we avoid this identification we shall also decline to identify our Culture B as the sum of the activities of Dr. Mannheim's *élites*. The anthropologist may study the social system, the economics, the arts, and the religion of a particular tribe; he may even study their psychological peculiarities: it is not merely by observing in detail all of these manifestations, and grasping them together, that he will approach to an understanding of the culture. For to understand the culture is to understand the people, and this means an imaginative understanding. Such understanding can never be complete: either it is abstract, and the essence has escaped, or it is *lived*; and in so far as it is *lived* the student will tend to identify himself so completely with the people whom he studies that he will lose the point of view from which it was worth while to study them. Understanding involves an area more extensive than that of which one can be conscious; one cannot be outside and inside at the same time. What we ordinarily mean by understanding of another people, of course, is an approximation towards understanding which stops short at the point at which the student would begin to lose some essential of his own culture. The man who, in order to understand the inner world of a cannibal tribe, has partaken in the practice of cannibalism has probably gone too far: he can never quite be one of his own folk again.[10*]

I have raised this question, however, solely in support of my contention that culture is not merely the sum of several activities, but a *way of life*. Now the specialist of genius, who may be fully qualified on the ground of his vocational attainment for membership of one of Dr. Mannheim's *élites*, may very well not be one of the "cultured persons" representative of the culture of the superior minority: he may be only a valuable contributor to it. Yet this culture, as observable in the past, has never been co-extensive with class, whether an aristocracy or an upper middle class. A very large number of members of these classes always have been conspicuously deficient in "culture." I think that in the past the repository of "culture" has been the *élite* mostly drawn from the dominant class of the time, constituting the primary consumers of the work of thought and art produced by the minority members, who will have originated from various classes, including that class itself. The units of this *élite* will, some of them, be individuals;

others may be families. But the individuals from the dominant class who compose the nucleus of the cultural *élite* must not thereby be cut off from the class to which they belong, for without their membership of that class they would not have their part to play. For it is their function, in relation to the producers, to transmit the culture which they have inherited; just as it is their function, in relation to the rest of their class, to keep it from ossification. It is the function of the class as a whole to preserve and communicate standards of *manners*, which is itself a vital element in the higher level of culture. It is the function of the superior members and superior families to preserve this culture, as it is the function of the producers to alter it.

In an *élite* composed of individuals who find their way into it solely for their individual preeminence, the differences of background will be so great that they will be united only by their common interests, and separated by everything else. An *élite* must therefore be attached to some class, whether higher or lower: but so long as there are classes at all it is likely to be the dominant class that attracts this *élite* to itself. What would happen in a classless society – which is much more difficult to envisage than people think – brings us into the area of conjecture. There are, however, some guesses which seem to me worth venturing.

The primary channel of transmission of culture is the family: no man wholly escapes from the kind, or wholly surpasses the degree, of culture which he acquired from his early environment. It would not do to suggest that this can be the *only* channel of transmission: in a society of any complexity it is supplemented and continued by other conduits of tradition. Even in relatively primitive societies this is so. In more civilised communities of specialised activities, in which not all the sons followed the occupation of their father, the apprentice (ideally, at least) did not merely serve his master, and did not merely learn from him as one would learn at a technical school – he became assimilated into a way of life which went with that particular trade or craft; and perhaps the lost secret of the craft is this, that not merely a skill but a way of life was transmitted. Culture – distinguishable from knowledge about culture – was transmitted by the older universities: young men have profited there who have been profitless students, and who have acquired no taste for learning, or for Gothic architecture, or for college ritual and form. I suppose that something of the same sort may be transmitted also by secret societies: for initiation is an introduction into a way of life, of however restricted viability, received from the past and to be perpetuated in the future. But the most important channel of transmission of culture remains the family: and when family life fails to play its part we must expect our culture to deteriorate. Now, the family is an institution of which nearly everybody speaks well: but it is advisable to remember that this is a term which may vary in extension. In the present age it means little more than the living members. Even of living members it is an exception when an advertisement depicts three generations: the usual family on the hoardings shows two parents and one or two young children. What is held up for admiration is not devotion to a family, but personal affection between the members of it: and the smaller the family, the more easily can this personal affection be sentimentalised. But when I speak of the family, I have in mind a bond which embraces a longer period of time than this: a piety towards the dead, however obscure, and a solicitude for the unborn, however remote. Unless this reverence for past and future is cultivated in the home, it can never be more than a verbal convention in the community. Such an interest in the past is very different from a self-centred interest in genealogy; such a responsibility for the future is a different thing from that of the builder of social programmes.

I should say, then, that in a developed but vigorous society there will be visible both class and *élite*, with some overlapping and constant interaction between them. An *élite*, if it is a governing *élite*, and so far as the natural impulse to pass on to one's offspring power, property, and prestige is not artificially checked, will *tend* to establish itself as a class – it is this metamorphosis, I think, which leads to what appears to me a confusion in the mind of Dr. Mannheim. But an *élite* which thus transforms itself tends to lose its function as *élite*, for the qualities by which the original members won their position will not all be transmitted equally to their descendants.[11*] On the other hand, we have to consider what would be the consequence when the converse took place, and we have a society in which classes are replaced by *élites*. Dr. Mannheim seems to believe that this will happen; he has shown himself, as a passage which I have quoted shows, aware of the dangers; and he does not appear to be ready to propose definite safeguards against them.

The situation of a society without classes, and dominated exclusively by *élites*, is, I submit, one about which we have no reliable evidence. By such a society I suppose we must mean one in which every individual starts without advantage or handicap, and in which, by some mechanism set up by the best designers of such machinery, everybody will find his way, or be directed, to that station in life which he is best fitted to fill, and every position will be occupied by the man or woman best fitted for it. Of course, not even the most sanguine would expect the system to work as well as that: if, by and large, it seemed to come nearer to putting the right people in the right places than any previous system, we should all be satisfied. When I say "dominated," rather than "governed," by *élites* I mean that such a society must not be content only to be *governed* by the right people: it must see that the ablest artists and architects rise to the top, influence taste, and execute the important public commissions: it must do the same by the other arts and by science; and above all, perhaps, it must be such that in speculative thought the ablest minds will find expression and receive attention. The system must not only do all this for society *in a particular situation* – it must go on doing it from generation to generation.

It would be folly to deny that in a particular phase of a country's development, and *for a limited purpose*, an *élite* unsupported by a class can do a very good job. It may, by chucking out a previous governing group, which in contrast to itself may be a *class*, save, reform, or revitalise the national life. But we have very little evidence about the perpetuation of government by *élite*, and such as we have is unsatisfactory. A considerable time must elapse before we can draw any illustration from Russia. Russia is a vigorous and promising country; it is also a very big country; and it will need a long period of peace and internal development. Three things may happen. It may show us how a stable government, and a flourishing culture, can be transmitted only through *élites*; it may lapse into lethargy; or the governing *élite* may follow the course of other governing *élites*, and become a governing class. Nor can we rely upon any evidence from the United States of America. The important revolution, in that country, was not what is called *the* Revolution in the history books, but the Civil War; after which arose a plutocratic *élite*; at which time the expansion and material development of the country was accelerated; and after which was swollen that stream of mixed immigration, bringing (or rather multiplying) some danger of development into a *caste* system.[12*] For the sociologist the evidence for America dates from about the same period as that for the U.S.S.R. Some evidence about government by *élite* comes from France. A governing class, which during a long period in which the Throne was all-powerful, had ceased to govern, was reduced to the ordinary level of citizenship. France has had no governing class: her political life in the Third Republic, whatever else we may say of it, was *unsettled*. And here we may remark that when a dominant class, however badly it has performed its function, is forcibly removed, its function is not wholly taken over by any other. The "flight of the wild geese" is perhaps a symbol of the harm that England has done to Ireland – more serious, from this point of view, than any of the grievances which the Irish most often recall.[13] It may be that England has done more harm to Wales and Scotland, by gently attracting their upper classes to certain public schools, than by the wrongs (some real, some imaginary, some due to other causes) voiced by their respective nationalists. But I say I wish to reserve judgment about Russia. That country, at the time of its revolution, may still have been at so early a stage of its development that the removal of its upper class may prove, not only not to have arrested that development, but to have stimulated it.

There are, however, some grounds for believing that the elimination of an upper class can be a disaster for a country at a more developed stage. It is certainly a disaster, as well as a great wrong, when that elimination is performed by a foreign nation. I am not prepared to deny that in some circumstances it may be necessary even for a nation with a long history behind it, and a highly developed society, to remove its governing class. Many human beings have had to submit to the amputation of a limb as a condition of preserving their life: but no one pretends that an artificial limb is just as satisfactory as a natural one. The comparison fails in this respect, that while even the youngest child that has lost a limb will never grow a new one, a young society may conceivably grow a new aristocracy. I doubt whether an old one can do so. If the "purge" of the upper classes in Germany towards the end of Hitler's regime was as thorough as we were led to believe at the time, it may prove to be not the least of the misfortunes which that man brought upon his country.[14]

I have, in the preceding paragraphs, been speaking only of the "governing class" and the "governing *élite*." But I must remind the reader again that in concerning ourselves with class versus *élite* we are concerned with the total culture of a country, and that involves a good deal more than government. We can yield ourselves with some confidence to a governing *élite*, as the republican Romans to a dictator, so long as we have in view a limited and defined purpose in a crisis – and a crisis may last a long time. This purpose also makes it possible to choose the *élite*, for we know what we are choosing it for. But if we are looking for a way to select the right people to constitute every *élite*, for an indefinite future, by what mechanism are we to do this? If our "purpose" is only to get the best people, in every walk of life, to the top, we lack a criterion of who are the best people; or, if we impose a criterion, it will have an oppressive effect upon novelty. The new work of genius, whether in art, science, or philosophy, frequently meets with opposition.

Some of Dr. Mannheim's disciples, plunging boldly into the morass into which he has placed one tentative foot, have no doubts as to how culture is to be transmitted, and *élites* created and maintained in a classless society. It is to be done by a well-planned method of education. "When a society has reached the level of planning," says Mr. F. C. Happold in his book *The New Aristocracy*,

> it may be possible, by means of education and of the new social controls, to ensure, to a greater extent, that the sort of *élites* which are most useful to the community will emerge. To ensure that there exist as large a number as possible of vigorous, dedicated, creative minds, capable of envisaging the pattern of a new order, and in all sorts of spheres working for it and influencing its growth, must be one of the chief tasks of the educational system of the immediate future. [28]

Mr. H. C. Dent, the editor of *The Times Educational Supplement*, is equally confident. In his book, *Education in Transition*, he says:

> I believe that the overwhelming majority of people in this country desire radical changes in its social order – changes that shall lead towards a planned society based on democratic principles, infused with a genuinely democratic spirit, and ordered on genuinely democratic lines.
>
> I believe this more equitable social order to be not impossible of achievement in the near future. . . .
>
> I believe that if we seize that opportunity we shall as a people march forward to a grander and nobler destiny than we have yet known. [5]

And, Mr. Dent says, "without education for democracy we need not look for democracy" [5].[15*]

It is Dr. Mannheim who has let this wind out of the bag. But all that concerns me at the moment is not the whole content of these prophecies, but the question whether, by education alone, we can ensure the transmission of culture in a society from which many educationists seem to want to remove class distinctions altogether. There is, in any case, a danger of interpreting "education" to cover both too much and too little: too little, when it implies that education is limited to what can be taught; too much, when it implies that everything worth preserving can be transmitted by teaching. In the society desired, what the family can transmit will be limited to the minimum, especially if the child is to be, as Mr. Dent hopes, manipulated by a unified educational system "from the cradle to the grave."[16] And unless the child is decided, by the officials who will have the task of sorting him out, to be just like his father, he will be brought up in a different – not necessarily a better, because all will be equally good, but a different – school environment, and trained on what the official opinion of the moment considers to be "the genuinely democratic lines." The *élites*, in consequence, will consist solely of individuals whose only common bond will be their professional interest – with no social cohesion, and with no social continuity. They will be united only by a part, and that the most conscious part, of their personalities; they will meet like committees. The greater part of their "culture" will be only what they share with all the other individuals composing their nation.

If it be admitted that the functions of class cannot be performed by *élites*, any more than those of *élites* can be performed by classes, then some current notions about education must be reexamined. And in doing this we should have to investigate the meaning of two popular ideas: that of *equality* and that of *equal opportunity*.[17*] It is possible that neither of these ideas is tenable without important qualification; it is also possible that they are not wholly compatible.[18]

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NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "This paper is a section of an essay on the Definition of Culture. It is regrettable that Culture should have to be discussed at all, for our talking about it may be only a symptom of its disappearance; but the word so frequently turns up, and is so frequently used either with no clear meaning, or in a confusion of several meanings, that it cannot be ignored. In a draft of a chapter to precede the present paper, published in a collection of papers by various hands entitled *Prospect for Christendom*, I endeavoured to distinguish three distinct though related uses of the term 'culture': in relation to the development of the individual, in relation to the development of a superior group or class within a society, and in relation to the development of a society as a whole."

The present essay would be revised and published in 1948 as *NTDC*, chapter II. Its early pages, especially, are substantially similar to the final version. The most significant differences are identified here in the notes. A revised version of "Cultural Forces in the Human Order," TSE's contribution to *Prospect for Christendom* (6.605), would become chapter I of *NTDC*, "The Three Senses of 'Culture.'"

2. F. C. Happold, *Towards a New Aristocracy: A Contribution to Educational Planning* (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), 27. *NTDC* omits this reference to Happold, though his phrase "be drawn from all sections of society" is retained, unattributed, as exemplary.

3*. TSE's note: "The quotations which follow are from his *Man and Society*." TSE quotes from Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction: Studies in Modern Social Structure* (London: Kegan, Paul, 1935). He reviewed this book in "Man and Society" (6.74).

4. TSE developed this point in both "Notes towards a Definition of Culture" (6.343) and "Cultural Forces in the Human Order" (6.605).

5. This metaphor is abbreviated in *NTDC* to read "thus the movement of culture would proceed in a kind of cycle, each class nourishing the others."

6. In *NTDC*, TSE replaces this claim with the sentence, "This gives it a difference in kind from the aristocratic society which preceded it, and from the mass-society which is expected to follow it."

7. In place of the last two sentences, *NTDC* introduces Mannheim's words with the brief remark, "Yet he says quite clearly."

8*. TSE's note: "Dr. Mannheim proceeds to call attention to a tendency in mass-society to renounce even the achievement principle [91-92]. This passage is important; but as the author believes (and I agree with him) that the dangers from this are still more alarming, it is unnecessary to quote it here."

9. In early anticipation, TSE refers to chapter I of *NTDC*.

10*. TSE's note: "Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* gives a hint of something similar."

11*. TSE's note: "It may be observed that the *instability* of an *élite* may be necessary to its function, for its instability may be the condition for the admission and propagation of new ideas and ways of thinking. I do not know what proportion of students of the London School of Economics, and similar institutions, marry each other; but even if endogamy within *élites* was the universal practice, we should hardly expect all the offspring to qualify for membership."

12*. TSE's note: "I believe that the essential difference between a caste and a class system is that the basis of the former is a difference of race such that the dominant class considers itself racially superior to the lower classes."

13. The "Flight of the Wild Geese" refers to the voluntary exile of approximately 14,000 Jacobite soldiers who were permitted to leave Ireland to serve in the French and other continental armies under the 1691 Treaty of Limerick.

14. Only the first two sentences of this paragraph survive in *NTDC*. Many of those involved in the July 1944 military plot against Hitler, and many of the nearly 5,000 who were executed following its failure, were members of the Prussian nobility (Junkers).

15*. TSE's note: "A leading article in *The Times Educational Supplement* of July 7th, 1945, says: 'One of the purposes of the English Foundation for Educational Research is to bring educational practice more nearly into line with the ideals of development that have been formulated for the members of a Christian democracy.' Formulated by whom? by what authority? according to what definition of 'Christian'?" TSE responds here to the unsigned "Purpose of Research," *TES* (7 July 1945), which argues that research in the field of education "involves both facts and values" and cannot "evade the problem of social goals and ideals" (319).

In the main text, TSE quotes again from Happold's *Towards a New Aristocracy*, and from H. C. Dent's *A New Order in English Education* (Bickley, Kent: University of London Press, 1942); his reference to Dent's *Education in Transition* is in error. Harold Collett Dent (1894-1995), English educator and journalist, was editor of the *TES* from 1940 to 1951 and the author of numerous books on British education.

This entire paragraph, including the quotations from Happold and Dent, is omitted from *NTDC*, whose text resumes with the second sentence of the following paragraph. Happold, who wrote to TSE after reading the present essay, may have influenced this decision. On 3 Dec 1945, TSE responded, "[I]f you feel that I have represented your views as being more absolute than they are and that I have distorted them by omitting the qualifications, I shall be very glad to alter my text accordingly if I publish it as a part of a book. I shall have no difficulty in doing so because I do not think that the objections you raise to my interpretation affect my main argument." While conceding some of TSE's points in criticism on 5 Dec, Happold reiterated his wish "not to be portrayed as a doctrinaire when both my thinking and practice are, in fact, to a great extent empirical." One reference to Happold survives in chapter VI of *NTDC*; Dent appears briefly in chapter II and slightly more extensively in chapter VI.

Happold would later dedicate his book *Mysticism* (1963) "To T. S. Eliot / poet of *Four Quartets*."

16. Dent, *Education in Transition: A Sociological Study of the Impact of War on English Education, 1939-1943* (London: Kegan Paul, 1944), 183. The quoted phrase is associated with the provision of comprehensive social services in the welfare state. In *Education in Transition*, Dent uses it to characterize the program of educational reform developed in his *A New Order in English Education*, which TSE quoted above.

17*. TSE's note: "For the first of these we may take a statement by Mr. Herbert Read in *The Politics of the Unpolitical*: 'You may say if you like that equality is not rational – that since people are not born equal, not equally endowed by nature, that therefore they do not deserve to live equally. But I do not claim that the principle of equality is a rational doctrine. On the contrary, it is an irrational dogma, a *mystique*. . . . I say quite deliberately that unless we are inspired by that mystical or mythical idea of social equality, we can not and we do not believe in the brotherhood of man.'

"For the second we may take one of five points, communicated in a letter to *The Times* on December 21st, 1940, signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Lang), the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster (Dr. Hinsley), the Archbishop of York (Dr. Temple), and the Moderator of the Free Church Council (Dr. Armstrong): 'Every child, regardless of race or class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capacities.'"

TSE quotes Read's essay collection *The Politics of the Unpolitical* (London: Routledge, 1943), 26-27; and "Foundations of Peace: A Christian Basis – Agreement among the Churches," *The Times* (21 Dec 1940), 5.

18. This brief concluding paragraph on education and equality is replaced in *NTDC* by a longer discussion of the "case for a society with a class structure" and its relation to the transmission of culture.

What Is a Classic?[1*]

The subject which I have taken is simply the question: "What is a classic?" It is not a new question. There is, for instance, a famous essay by Ste.-Beuve with this title.[2†] The pertinence of asking this question, with Virgil particularly in mind, is obvious: whatever the definition we arrive at, it cannot be one which excludes Virgil – we may say confidently that it must be one which will expressly reckon with him. But before I go farther, I should like to dispose of certain prejudices and anticipate certain misunderstandings. I do not aim to supersede, or to outlaw, any use of the word "classic" which precedent has made permissible. The word has, and will continue to have, several meanings in several contexts: I am concerned with one meaning in one context. In defining the term in this way, I do not bind myself, for the future, not to use the term in any of the other ways in which it has been used. If, for instance, I am discovered on some future occasion, in writing, in public speech, or in conversation, to be using the word "classic" merely to mean a "standard author" in any language – using it merely as an indication of the greatness, or of the permanence and importance of a writer in his own field, as when we speak of *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* as a classic of schoolboy fiction, or *Handley Cross* as a classic of the hunting field – no one should expect one to apologize. And there is a very interesting book called *A Guide to the Classics*, which tells you how to pick the Derby winner.[3] On other occasions, I permit myself to mean by "the classics," either Latin and Greek literature *in toto*, or the greatest authors of those languages, as the context indicates. And, finally, I think that the account of the classic which I propose to give here should remove it from the area of the antithesis between "classic" and "romantic" – a pair of terms belonging to literary politics, and therefore arousing winds of passion which I ask Aeolus, on this occasion, to contain in the bag.[4]

This leads me to my next point. By the terms of the classic-romantic controversy, to call any work of art "classical," implies either the highest praise or the most contemptuous abuse, according to the party to which one belongs. It implies certain particular merits or faults: either the perfection of form, or the absolute zero of frigidity. But I want to define one kind of art, and am not concerned that it is absolutely and in every respect *better* or *worse* than another kind. I shall enumerate certain qualities which I should expect the classic to display. But I do not say that, if a literature is to be a great literature, it must have any one author, or any one period, in which all these qualities are manifested. If, as I think, they are all to be found in Virgil, that is not to assert that he is the greatest poet who ever wrote – such an assertion about any poet seems to me meaningless – and it is certainly not to assert that Latin literature is greater than any other literature. We need not consider it as a defect of any literature, if no one author, or no one period, is completely classical; or if, as is true of English literature, the period which most nearly fills the classical definition is not the greatest. I think that those literatures, of which English is one of the most eminent, in which the classical qualities are scattered between various authors and several periods, may well be the richer. Every language has its own resources, and its own limitations. The conditions of a language, and the conditions of the history of the people who speak it, may put out of question the expectation of a classical period, or a classical author. That is not in itself any more a matter for regret than it is for gratulation. It did happen that the history of Rome was such, the character of the Latin language was such, that at a certain moment a uniquely classical poet was possible: though we must remember that it needed that particular poet, and a lifetime of labour on the part of that poet, to make the classic out of his material. And, of course, Virgil couldn't know that *that* was what he was doing. He was, if any poet ever was, acutely aware of what he was trying to do: the one thing he couldn't aim at, or know that he was doing, was to compose a classic: for it is only by hindsight, and in historical perspective, that a classic can be known as such.

If there is one word on which we can fix, which will suggest the maximum of what I mean by the term "a classic," it is the word *maturity*. I shall distinguish between the universal classic, like Virgil, and the classic which is only such in relation to the other literature in its own language, or according to the view of life of a particular period. A classic can only occur when a civilization is mature; when a language and a literature are mature; and it must be the work of a mature mind. It is the importance of that civilization and of that language, as well as the comprehensiveness of the mind of the individual poet, which gives the universality. To define *maturity* without assuming that the hearer already knows what it means, is almost impossible: let us say then, that if we are properly mature, as well as educated persons, we can recognize maturity in a civilization and in a literature, as we do in the other human beings whom we encounter. To make the meaning of maturity really apprehensible – indeed, even to make it acceptable – to the immature, is perhaps impossible. But if we are mature we either recognize maturity immediately, or come to know it on more intimate acquaintance. No reader of Shakespeare, for instance, can fail to recognize, increasingly as he himself grows up, the gradual ripening of Shakespeare's mind: even a less developed reader can perceive the rapid development of Elizabethan literature and drama as a whole, from early Tudor crudity to the plays of Shakespeare, and perceive a decline in the work of Shakespeare's successors. We can also observe, upon a little conversance, that the plays of Christopher Marlowe exhibit a greater maturity of mind and of style, than the plays which Shakespeare wrote at the same age: it is interesting to speculate whether, if Marlowe had lived as long as Shakespeare, his development would have continued at the same pace. I doubt it: for we observe some minds maturing earlier than others, and we observe that those which mature very early do not always develop very far. I raise this point as a reminder, first that the value of maturity depends upon the value of that which matures, and second, that we should know when we are concerned with the maturity of individual writers, and when with the relative maturity of literary periods. A writer who individually has a more mature mind, may belong to a less mature period than another, so that in that respect his work will be less mature. The maturity of a literature is the reflection of that of the society in which it is produced: an individual author – notably Shakespeare and Virgil – can do much to develop his language: but he cannot bring that language to maturity unless the work of his predecessors has prepared it for his final touch. A mature literature, therefore, has a history behind it: a history, that is not merely a chronicle, an accumulation of manuscripts and writings of this kind and that, but an ordered though unconscious progress of a language to realize its own potentialities within its own limitations.

It is to be observed, that a society, and a literature, like an individual human being, do not necessarily mature equally and concurrently in every respect. The precocious child is often, in some obvious ways, childish for his age in comparison with ordinary children. Is there any one period of English literature to which we can point as being fully mature, comprehensively and in equilibrium? I do not think so: and, as I shall repeat later, I hope it is not so. We cannot say that any individual poet in English has in the course of his life become a more mature man than Shakespeare: we cannot even say that any poet has done so much, to make the English language capable of expressing the most subtle thought or the most refined shades of feeling. Yet we cannot but feel that a play like Congreve's *Way of the World* is in some way more mature than any play of Shakespeare's: but only in this respect, that it reflects a more mature society – that is, it reflects a greater maturity of *manners*.[5] The society for which Congreve wrote was, from our point of view, coarse and brutal enough: yet it is nearer to ours than the society of the Tudors: perhaps for that reason we judge it the more severely. Nevertheless, it was a society more polished and less provincial: its mind was shallower, its sensibility more restricted; it has lost some promise of maturity but realized another. So to maturity of *mind* we must add maturity of *manners*.

The progress towards maturity of language is, I think, more easily recognized and more readily acknowledged in the development of prose, than in that of poetry. In considering prose we are less distracted by individual differences in greatness, and more inclined to demand approximation towards a common standard, a common vocabulary and a common sentence structure: it is often, in fact, the prose which departs the farthest from these common standards, which is individual to the extreme, that we are apt to denominate "poetic prose." At a time when England had already accomplished miracles in poetry, her prose was relatively immature, developed sufficiently for certain purposes but not for others: at that same time, when the French language had given little promise of poetry as great as that in English, French prose was much more mature than English prose. You have only to compare any Tudor writer with Montaigne – and Montaigne himself, as a stylist, is only a precursor, his style not ripe enough to fulfil the French requirements for the classic. Our prose was ready for some tasks before it could cope with others: a Malory could come long before a Hooker, a Hooker before a Hobbes, and a Hobbes before an Addison. Whatever difficulties we have in applying this standard to poetry, it is possible to see that the development of a classic prose is the development towards a *common style*. By this I do not mean that the best writers are indistinguishable from each other. The essential and characteristic differences remain: it is not that the differences are less, but that they are more subtle and refined. To a sensitive palate the difference between the prose of Addison and that of Swift will be as marked as the difference between two vintage wines to a connoisseur. What we find, in a period of classic prose, is not a mere common convention of writing, like the common style of newspaper leader writers, but a community of taste. The age which precedes a classic age, may exhibit both eccentricity and monotony: monotony because the resources of the language have not yet been explored, and eccentricity because there is yet no generally accepted standard – if, indeed, that can be called eccentric where there is no centre. Its writing may be at the same time pedantic and licentious. The age following a classic age, may also exhibit eccentricity and monotony: monotony because the resources of the language have, for the time at least, been exhausted, and eccentricity because originality comes to be more valued than correctness. But the age in which we find a common style, will be an age when society has achieved a moment of order and stability, of equilibrium and harmony; as the age which manifests the greatest extremes of individual style will be an age of immaturity or an age of senility.[6†]

Maturity of language may naturally be expected to accompany maturity of mind and manners. We may expect the language to approach maturity at the moment when men have a critical sense of the past, a confidence in the present, and no conscious doubt of the future. In literature, this means that the poet is aware of his predecessors, and that we are aware of the predecessors behind his work, as we may be aware of ancestral traits in a person who is at the same time individual and unique. The predecessors should be themselves great and honoured: but their accomplishment must be such as to suggest still undeveloped resources of the language, and not such as to oppress the younger writers with the fear that everything that can be done has been done, in their language. The poet, certainly, in a mature age, may still obtain stimulus from the hope of doing something that his predecessors have not done; he may even be in revolt against them, as a promising adolescent may revolt against the beliefs, the habits and the manners of his parents; but, in retrospect, we can see that he is also the continuer of their traditions, that he preserves essential family characteristics, and that his difference of behaviour is a difference in the circumstances of another age. And, on the other hand, just as we sometimes observe men whose lives are overshadowed by the fame of a father or grandfather, men of whom any achievement of which they are capable appears comparatively insignificant, so a late age of poetry may be consciously impotent to compete with its distinguished ancestry. We meet poets of this kind at the end of any age, poets with a sense of the past only, or alternatively, poets whose hope of the future is founded upon the attempt to renounce the past. The persistence of literary creativeness in any people, accordingly, consists in the maintenance of an unconscious balance between tradition in the larger sense – the collective personality, so to speak, realized in the literature of the past – and the originality of the living generation.

We cannot call the literature of the Elizabethan period, great as it is, wholly mature: we cannot call it classical. No close parallel can be drawn between the development of Greek and Latin literature, for Latin had Greek behind it; still less can we draw a parallel between these and any modern literature, for modern literatures have both Latin and Greek behind them. In the Renaissance there is an early semblance of maturity, which is borrowed from antiquity. We are aware of approaching nearer to maturity with Milton. Milton was in a better position to have a critical sense of the past – of a past in English literature – than his great predecessors. To read Milton is to be confirmed in respect for the genius of Spenser, and in gratitude to Spenser for having contributed towards making the verse of Milton possible. Yet the style of Milton is not a classic style: it is a style of a language still in formation, the style of a writer whose *masters* were not English, but Latin and to a less degree Greek. This, I think, is only saying what Johnson and in turn Landor said, when they complained of Milton's style not being quite English.[7] Let us qualify this judgment by saying immediately that Milton did much to develop the language. One of the signs of approach towards a classic style is a development towards greater complexity of sentence and period structure. Such development is apparent in the single work of Shakespeare, when we trace his style from the early to the late plays: we can even say that in his late plays he goes as far in the direction of complexity as is possible within the limits of dramatic verse, which are narrower than those of other kinds. But complexity for its own sake is not a proper goal: its purpose must be, first, the precise expression of finer shades of feeling and thought; second, the introduction of greater refinement and variety of music. When an author appears, in his love of the elaborate structure, to have lost the ability to say anything simply; when his addiction to pattern becomes such that he says things elaborately which should properly be said simply, and thus limits his range of expression, the process of complexity ceases to be quite healthy, and the writer is losing touch with the spoken language. Nevertheless, as verse develops, in the hands of one poet after another, it tends from monotony to variety, from simplicity to complexity; as it declines, it tends towards monotony again, though it may perpetuate the formal structure to which genius gave life and meaning. You will judge for yourselves how far this generalization is applicable to the predecessors and followers of Virgil: we can all see this secondary monotony in the eighteenth-century imitators of Milton – who himself is never monotonous. There comes a time when a new simplicity, even a relative crudity, may be the only alternative.

You will have anticipated the conclusion towards which I have been drawing: that those qualities of the classic which I have so far mentioned – maturity of mind, maturity of manners, maturity of language and perfection of the common style – are most nearly to be illustrated, in English literature, in the eighteenth century; and, in poetry, most in the poetry of Pope. If that were all I had to say on the matter, it would certainly not be new, and it would not be worth saying. That would be merely proposing a choice between two errors at which men have arrived before: one, that the eighteenth century is the finest[8†] period of English literature; and the other, that the classical idea should be wholly discredited. My own opinion is, that we have no classic age, and no classic poet, in English; that when we see why this is so, we have not the slightest reason for regret; but that, nevertheless, we must maintain the classic ideal before our eyes. Because we must maintain it, and because the English genius of language has had other things to do than to realize it, we cannot afford either to reject or to overrate the age of Pope; we cannot see English literature as a whole, or aim rightly in the future, without a critical appreciation of the degree to which the classical qualities are exemplified in the work of Pope: which means that unless we are able to enjoy the work of Pope, we cannot arrive at a full understanding of English poetry.

It is fairly obvious that the realization of classical qualities by Pope was obtained at a high price – to the exclusion of some greater potentialities of English verse. Now, to some extent, the sacrifice of some potentialities in order to realize others, is a condition of artistic creation, as it is a condition of life in general. In life the man who refuses to sacrifice anything, to gain anything else, ends in mediocrity or failure; though, on the other hand, there is the specialist who has sacrificed too much for too little, or who has been born too completely the specialist to have had anything to sacrifice. But in the English eighteenth century, we have reason for feeling that too much was excluded. There was the mature mind: but it was a narrow one. English society and English letters were not provincial, in the sense that they were not isolated from, and not lingering behind, the best European society and letters. Yet the age itself was, in a manner of speaking, a provincial age. When one thinks of a Shakespeare, a Jeremy Taylor, a Milton, in England – of a Racine, a Molière, a Pascal, in France – in the seventeenth century, one is inclined to say that the eighteenth century had perfected its formal garden, only by restricting the area under cultivation. We feel that if the classic is really a worthy ideal, it must be capable of exhibiting an amplitude, a catholicity, to which the eighteenth century cannot lay claim; qualities which are present in some great authors, like Chaucer, who cannot be regarded in my sense as classics of English literature; and which are fully present in the mediaeval mind of Dante. For in the Divine Comedy, if anywhere, we find the classic in a modern European language. In the eighteenth century, we are oppressed by the limited range of sensibility, and especially in the scale of religious feeling. It is not that, in England at least, the poetry is not Christian. It is not even that the poets were not devout Christians; for a pattern of orthodoxy of principle, and sincere piety of feeling, you may look long before you find a poet more genuine than Samuel Johnson. Yet there are evidences of a deeper religious sensibility in the poetry of Shakespeare, whose belief and practice can be only a matter of conjecture. And this restriction of religious sensibility itself produces a kind of provinciality (though we must add that in this sense the nineteenth century was more provincial still): the provinciality which indicates the disintegration of Christendom, the decay of a common belief and a common culture. It would seem then, that our eighteenth century, in spite of its classical achievement – an achievement, I believe, which still has great importance as an example for the future – was lacking some condition which makes the creation of a true classic possible. What this condition is, we must return to Virgil to discover.

I should like first to rehearse the characteristics which I have already attributed to the classic, with special application to Virgil, to his language, his civilization, and the particular moment in the history of that language and civilization at which he arrived. Maturity of mind: this needs history, and the consciousness of history. Consciousness of history cannot be fully awake, except where there is other history than the history of the poet's own people: we need this in order to see our own place in history. There must be the knowledge of the history of at least one other highly civilized people, and of a people whose civilization is sufficiently cognate to have influenced and entered into our own. This is a consciousness which the Romans had, and which the Greeks, however much more highly we may estimate their achievement – and indeed, we may respect it all the more on this account – could not possess. It was a consciousness, certainly, which Virgil himself did much to develop. From the beginning, Virgil, like his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, was constantly adapting and using the discoveries, traditions and inventions of Greek poetry: to make use of a foreign literature in this way marks a further stage of civilization beyond making use only of the earlier stages of one's own – though I think we can say that no poet has ever shown a finer sense of proportion than Virgil, in the uses he made of Greek and of earlier Latin poetry. It is this development of one literature, or one civilization, in relation to another, which gives a peculiar significance to the subject of Virgil's epic. In Homer, the conflict between the Greeks and the Trojans is hardly larger in scope than a feud between one Greek city-state and a coalition of other city-states: behind the story of Aeneas is the consciousness of a more radical distinction, a distinction, which is at the same time a statement of *relatedness*, between two great cultures, and, finally, of their reconciliation under an all-embracing destiny.

Virgil's maturity of mind, and the maturity of his age, are exhibited in this awareness of history. With maturity of mind I have associated maturity of manners and absence of provinciality. I suppose that, to a modern European suddenly precipitated into the past, the social behaviour of the Romans and the Athenians would seem indifferently coarse, barbarous and offensive. But if the poet can portray something superior to contemporary practice, it is not in the way of anticipating some later, and quite different code of behaviour, but by an insight into what the conduct of his own people at his own time might be, at its best. House parties of the wealthy, in Edwardian England, were not exactly what we read of in the pages of Henry James: but Mr. James's society was an idealization, of a kind, of *that* society, and not an anticipation of any other. I think that we are conscious, in Virgil more than in any other Latin poet – for Catullus and Propertius seem ruffians, and Horace somewhat plebeian, by comparison – of a refinement of manners springing from a delicate sensibility, and particularly in that test of manners, private and public conduct between the sexes. It is not for me, in a gathering of people, all of whom may be better scholars than I, to review the story of Aeneas and Dido. But I have always thought the meeting of Aeneas with the shade of Dido, in Book VI, not only one of the most poignant, but one of the most civilized passages in poetry.[9] It is complex in meaning and economical in expression, for it not only tells us about the attitude of Dido – still more important is what it tells us about the attitude of Aeneas. Dido's behaviour appears almost as a projection of Aeneas' own conscience: this, we feel, is the way in which Aeneas' conscience would *expect* Dido to behave to him. The point, it seems to me, is not that Dido is unforgiving – though it is important that, instead of railing at him, she merely snubs him – perhaps the most telling snub in all poetry: what matters most is, that Aeneas does not forgive himself – and this, significantly, in spite of the fact of which he is well aware, that all that he has done has been in compliance with destiny, or in consequence of the machinations of gods who are themselves, we feel, only instruments of a greater inscrutable power. Here, what I chose as an instance of civilized manners, proceeds to testify to civilized consciousness and conscience: but all of the levels at which we may consider a particular episode, belong to one whole. It will be observed, finally, that the behaviour of Virgil's characters (I might except Turnus, the man without a destiny)[10] never appears to be according to some purely local or tribal code of manners: it is in its time, both Roman and European. Virgil certainly, on the plane of manners, is not provincial.

To attempt to demonstrate the maturity of language and style of Virgil is, for the present occasion, a superfluous task: many of you could perform it better than I, and I think that we should all be in accord. But it is worth repeating that Virgil's style would not have been possible without a literature behind him, and without his having a very intimate knowledge of this literature: so that he was, in a sense, re-writing Latin poetry – as when he borrows a phrase or a device from a predecessor and improves upon it. He was a learned author, all of whose learning was relevant to his task; and he had, for his use, just enough literature behind him and not too much. As for maturity of style, I do not think that any poet has ever developed a greater command of the complex structure, both of sense and sound, without losing the resource of direct, brief and startling simplicity when the occasion required it. On this I need not dilate: but I think it is worth while to say a word more about the *common style*, because this is something which we cannot perfectly illustrate from English poetry, and to which we are apt to pay less than enough deference.[11†] In modern European literature, the closest approximations to the ideal of a common style, are probably to be found in Dante and Racine; the nearest we have to it in English poetry is Pope, and Pope's is a common style which, in comparison, is of a very narrow range. A common style is one which makes us exclaim, not "this is a man of genius using the language" but "this realizes the genius of the language." We do not say this when we read Pope, because we are too conscious of all the resources of the English speech upon which Pope does not draw; we can at most say "this realizes the genius of the English language of a particular epoch." We do not say this when we read Shakespeare or Milton, because we are always conscious of the greatness of the man, and of the miracles that he is performing with the language; we come nearer perhaps with Chaucer – but that Chaucer is using a different, from our point of view a cruder speech. And Shakespeare and Milton, as later history shows, left open many possibilities of other uses of English in poetry: whereas, after Virgil, it is truer to say that no great development was possible, until the Latin language became something different.

At this point I should like to return to a question which I have already suggested: the question whether the achievement of a classic, in the sense in which I have been using the term throughout, is, for the people and the language of its origin, altogether an unmixed blessing – even though it is unquestionably a ground for pride. To have this question raised in one's mind, it is almost enough simply to have contemplated Latin poetry after Virgil, to have considered the extent to which later poets lived and worked under the shadow of his greatness: so that we praise or dispraise them, according to standards which he set – admiring them, sometimes, for discovering some variation which was new, or even for merely rearranging patterns of words so as to give a pleasing faint reminder of the remote original.[12†] But English poetry, and French poetry also, may be considered fortunate in this: that the greatest poets have exhausted only particular areas. We cannot say that, since the age of Shakespeare, and respectively since the time of Racine, there has been any really first-rate poetic drama in England or in France; since Milton, we have had no great epic poem, though there have been great long poems. It is true that every supreme poet, classic or not, tends to exhaust the ground he cultivates, so that it must, after yielding a diminishing crop, finally be left in fallow for some generations.

Here it may be objected that the effect on a literature which I am imputing to the classic, results not from the classic character of that work, but simply from its greatness: for I have denied to Shakespeare and to Milton the title of classics, in the sense in which I am employing the term throughout, and yet have admitted that no supremely great poetry of the same kind has been written since.[13†] That every great work of poetry tends to make impossible the production of equally great works of the same kind is indisputable. The reason may be stated partly in terms of conscious purpose: no first-rate poet would attempt to do again, what has already been done as well as it can be done in his language. It is only after the language – its cadence, still more than vocabulary and syntax – has, with time and social change, sufficiently altered, that another dramatic poet as great as Shakespeare, or another epic poet as great as Milton, can become possible. Not only every great poet, but every genuine, though lesser poet, fulfils once for all some possibility of the language, and so leaves one possibility less for his successors. The vein that he has exhausted may be a very small one; or may represent some major form of poetry, the epic or dramatic. But what the great poet has exhausted is merely one form, and not the whole language. When the great poet is also a great classic poet, he exhausts, not a form only, but the language of his time; and the language of his time, as used by him, will be the language in its perfection. So that it is not the poet alone of whom we have to take account, but the language in which he writes: it is not merely that a classic poet exhausts the language, but that an exhaustible language is the kind which may produce a classic poet.

We may be inclined to ask, then, whether we are not fortunate in possessing a language which, instead of having produced a classic, can boast a rich variety in the past, and the possibility of further novelty in the future? Now while we are *inside* a literature, while we speak the same language, and have fundamentally the same culture as that which produced the literature of the past, we want to maintain two things: a pride in what our literature has already accomplished, and a belief in what it may still accomplish in the future. If we cease to believe in the future, the past would cease to be fully *our* past: it would become the past of a dead civilization. And this consideration must operate with particular cogency upon the minds of those who are engaged in the attempt to add to the store of English literature. There is no classic in English: therefore, any living poet can say, there is still hope that I – and those after me, for no one can face with equanimity, once he understands what is implied, the thought of being the *last* poet – may be able to write something which will be worth preserving. But from the aspect of eternity, such interest in the future has no meaning: when two languages are both dead languages, we cannot say that one is greater, because of the number and variety of its poets, or the other because its genius is more completely expressed in the work of one poet. What I wish to affirm, at one and the same time, is this: that, because English is a living language and the language in which we live, we may be glad that it has never completely realized itself in the work of one classic poet; but that, on the other hand, the classic criterion is of vital importance to us. We need it in order to judge our individual poets, though we refuse to judge our literature as a whole in comparison with one which has produced a classic. Whether a literature does culminate in a classic, is a matter of fortune. It is largely, I suspect, a question of the degree of fusion of the elements within that language; so that the Latin languages can approximate more closely to the classic, not simply because they are Latin, but because they are more homogeneous than English, and therefore tend more naturally towards the *common style*: whereas English, being the most various of great languages in its constituents, tends to variety rather than perfection, needs a longer time to realize its potency, and still contains, perhaps, more unexplored possibilities. It has, perhaps, the greatest capacity for changing and yet remaining itself.

I am now approaching the distinction between the relative and the absolute classic, the distinction between the literature which can be called classic in relation to its own language, and that which is classic in relation to a number of other languages. But first I wish to record one more characteristic of the classic, beyond those I have enumerated, which will help to establish this distinction, and to mark the difference between such a classic as Pope and such a classic as Virgil. It is convenient to recapitulate certain assertions which I made earlier.

I suggested, at the beginning, that a frequent, if not universal feature of the maturing of individuals may be a process of selection (not altogether conscious), of the development of some potentialities to the exclusion of others; and that a similarity may be found in the development of language and literature. If this is so, we should expect to find that in a minor classic literature, such as our own of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century, the elements excluded, to arrive at maturity, will be more numerous or more serious; and that satisfaction in the result, will always be qualified by our awareness of the possibilities of the language, revealed in the work of earlier authors, which have been ignored. The classic age of English literature is not representative of the total genius of the race: as I have intimated, we cannot say that that genius is wholly realized in any one period – with the result that we can still, by referring to one or another period of the past, envisage possibilities for the future. The English language is one which offers wide scope for legitimate divergencies of style; it seems to be such that no one age, and certainly no one writer, can establish a norm. The French language has seemed to be much more closely tethered to a normal style; yet, even in French, though the language appeared to have established itself, once for all, in the seventeenth century, there is an *esprit gaulois*, an element of richness present in Rabelais and in Villon, the awareness of which may qualify our judgment of the *wholeness* of Racine or

Molière, for we may feel that it is not only unrepresented but unreconciled. We may come to the conclusion, then, that the perfect classic must be one in which the whole genius of a people will be latent, if not all revealed; and that it can only appear in a language such that its whole genius can be present at once. We must accordingly add, to our list of characteristics of the classic, that of *comprehensiveness*. The classic must, within its formal limitations, express the maximum possible of the whole range of feeling which represents the character of the people who speak that language. It will represent this at its best, and it will also have the widest appeal: among the people to which it belongs, it will find its response among all classes and conditions of men.

When a work of literature has, beyond this comprehensiveness in relation to its own language, an equal significance in relation to a number of foreign literatures, we may say that it has also *universality*. We may for instance speak justly enough of the poetry of Goethe as constituting a classic, because of the place which it occupies in its own language and literature. Yet, because of its partiality, of the impermanence of some of its content, and the germanism of the sensibility; because Goethe appears, to a foreign eye, limited by his age, by his language, and by his culture, so that he is unrepresentative of the whole European tradition, and, like our own nineteenth-century authors, a little provincial, we cannot call him a *universal* classic. He is a universal author, in the sense that he is an author with whose works every European ought to be acquainted: but that is a different thing. Nor, on one count or another, can we expect to find the proximate approach to the classic in *any* modern language. It is necessary to go to the two dead languages: it is important that they are dead, because through their death we have come into our inheritance – the fact that they are dead would in itself give them no value, apart from the fact that all the peoples of Europe are their beneficiaries. And of all the great poets of Greece and Rome, I think that it is to Virgil that we owe the most for our standard of the classic: which, I will repeat, is not the same thing as pretending that he is the greatest, or the one to whom we are in every way the most indebted – it is of a particular debt that I speak. His comprehensiveness, his peculiar kind of comprehensiveness, is due to the unique position in our history of the Roman Empire and the Latin language: a position which may be said to conform to its *destiny*. This sense of destiny comes to consciousness in the *Aeneid*. Aeneas is himself, from first to last, a "man in fate," a man who is neither an adventurer nor a schemer, neither a vagabond nor a careerist, a man fulfilling his destiny, not under compulsion or arbitrary decree, and certainly from no stimulus to glory, but by surrendering his will to a higher power behind the gods who would thwart or direct him. He would have preferred to stop in Troy, but he becomes an exile, and something greater and more significant than any exile; he is exiled for a purpose greater than he can know, but which he recognizes; and he is not, in a human sense, a happy or successful man. But he is the symbol of Rome; and, as Aeneas is to Rome, so is ancient Rome to Europe. Thus Virgil acquires the centrality of the unique classic; he is at the centre of European civilization, in a position which no other poet can share or usurp. The Roman Empire and the Latin language were not any empire and any language, but an empire and a language with a unique destiny in relation to ourselves; and the poet in whom that Empire and that language came to consciousness and expression is a poet of unique destiny.

If Virgil is thus the consciousness of Rome and the supreme voice of her language, he must have a significance for us which cannot be expressed wholly in terms of literary appreciation and criticism. Yet, adhering to the problems of literature, or to the terms of literature in dealing with life, we may be allowed to imply more than we state. The value of Virgil to us, in literary terms, is in providing us with a criterion. We may, as I have said, have reasons to rejoice that this criterion is provided by a poet writing in a different language from our own: but that is not a reason for rejecting the criterion. To preserve the classical standard, and to measure every individual work of literature by it, is to see that, while our literature as a whole may contain everything, every single work in it may be defective in something. This may be a necessary defect, a defect without which some quality present would be lacking: but we must see it as a defect, at the same time that we see it as a necessity. In the absence of this standard of which I speak, a standard we cannot keep clearly before us if we rely on our own literature alone, we tend, first to admire works of genius for the wrong reasons – as we extol Blake for his *philosophy*, and Hopkins for his *style*: and from this we proceed to greater error, to giving the second-rate equal rank with the first-rate. In short, without the constant application of the classical measure, which we owe to Virgil more than to any other one poet, we tend to become provincial.

By "provincial" I mean here something more than I find in the dictionary definitions. I mean more, for instance, than "wanting the culture or polish of the capital,"[14] though, certainly, Virgil was of the Capital, to a degree which makes any later poet of equal stature look a little provincial;

and I mean more than "narrow in thought, in culture, in creed"[15] – a slippery definition this, for, from a modern liberal point of view, Dante was "narrow in thought, in culture, in creed," yet it may be the Broad Churchman, rather than the Narrow Churchman, who is the more provincial. I mean also a distortion of values, the exclusion of some, the exaggeration of others, which springs, not from lack of wide geographical perambulation, but from applying standards acquired within a limited area, to the whole of human experience; which confounds the contingent with the essential, the ephemeral with the permanent. In our age, when men seem more than ever prone to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information, and to try to solve problems of life in terms of engineering, there is coming into existence a new kind of provincialism which perhaps deserves a new name.[16] It is a provincialism, not of space, but of time; one for which history is merely the chronicle of human devices which have served their turn and been scrapped, one for which the world is the property solely of the living, a property in which the dead hold no shares. The menace of this kind of provincialism is, that we can all, all the peoples on the globe, be provincials together; and those who are not content to be provincials, can only become hermits. If this kind of provincialism led to greater tolerance, in the sense of forbearance, there might be more to be said for it; but it seems more likely to lead to our becoming indifferent, in matters where we ought to maintain a distinctive dogma or standard, and to our becoming intolerant, in matters which might be left to local or personal preference. We may have as many varieties of religion as we like, provided we all send our children to the same schools. But my concern here is only with the corrective to provincialism in literature. We need to remind ourselves that, as Europe is a whole (and still, in its progressive mutilation and disfigurement, the organism out of which any greater world harmony must develop), so European literature is a whole, the several members of which cannot flourish, if the same blood-stream does not circulate throughout the whole body. The blood-stream of European literature is Latin and Greek – not as two systems of circulation, but one, for it is through Rome that our parentage in Greece must be traced. What common measure of excellence have we in literature, among our several languages, which is not the classical measure? What mutual intelligibility can we hope to preserve, except in our common heritage of thought and feeling in those two languages, for the understanding of which, no European people is in any position of advantage over any other? No modern language could aspire to the universality of Latin, even though it came to be spoken by millions more than ever spoke Latin, and even though it came to be the universal means of communication between peoples of all tongues and cultures. No modern language can hope to produce a classic, in the sense in which I have called Virgil a classic. Our classic, the classic of all Europe, is Virgil.

In our several literatures, we have much wealth of which to boast, to which Latin has nothing to compare; but each literature has its greatness, not in isolation, but because of its place in a larger pattern, a pattern set in Rome. I have spoken of the new seriousness – *gravity* I might say – the new insight into history, illustrated by the dedication of Aeneas to Rome, to a future far beyond his living achievement. *His* reward was hardly more than a narrow beachhead and a political marriage in a weary middle age: his youth interred, its shadow moving with the shades the other side of Cumae. And so, I said, one envisages the destiny of ancient Rome. So we may think of Roman literature: at first sight, a literature of limited scope, with a poor muster of great names, yet universal as no other literature can be; a literature unconsciously sacrificing, in compliance to its destiny in Europe, the opulence and variety of later tongues, to produce, for us, the classic. It is sufficient that this standard should have been established once for all; the task does not have to be done again. But the maintenance of the standard is the price of our freedom, the defence of freedom against chaos. We may remind ourselves of this obligation, by our annual observance of piety towards the great ghost who guided Dante's pilgrimage: who, as it was his function to lead Dante towards a vision he could never himself enjoy, led Europe towards the Christian culture which he could never know; and who, speaking his final words in the new Italian speech, said in farewell

> Il temporal foco e l'eterno
> veduto hai, figlio, e sei venuto in parte
> dov'io per me più oltre non discerno.

> Son, the temporal fire and the eternal
> hast thou seen, and art come to a place where
> I, of myself, discern no further.[17]

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "The Presidential Address to the Virgil Society in 1944. Published by Faber & Faber 1945." As printed in *OPP*; significant alterations from the two Faber editions of *What Is a Classic?* – herein abbreviated "*Classic*" – are shown in the notes. In early 1945 Faber printed a special Virgil Society edition in wrappers for distribution gratis to members; on 2 Feb 1945 it printed the trade edition in boards with identical text and pagination for the lecture, but see the textual note for a unique addition to the Virgil Society edition.

TSE served in 1943-44 as the Virgil Society's first president and read "What Is a Classic?" at the City Literary Institute in London on Saturday, 14 Oct 1944, in honor of Virgil's birth date on the 15th. He had played a leading role in the founding of the Society and was a co-signer of the statement announcing its formation, published in the *TLS* of 18 Dec 1943. From the start, the founders made clear that their concerns were not purely literary: "The purpose of the Virgil Society is to bring together those men and women everywhere who are united in cherishing the central educational tradition of Western Europe. Among such persons the love of the poetry of Virgil is most likely to be found; and for such persons he is the fitting symbol of that tradition" (6.812).

For TSE's original introductory paragraph, included in both editions of *Classic*, see the textual note.

2†. In *Classic*: "with this title: whether it is a misfortune or not, that – not having read it for some thirty-odd years – accidents of the present time have prevented me from re-reading it before preparing this address, I hope to find out as soon as libraries are more accessible and books more plentiful." TSE refers to Sainte-Beuve, "Qu'est-ce qu'un classique" (1850).

3. Talbot Baines Reed's *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* (1887) helped establish the genre of the "public school story" in British juvenile literature. *Handley Cross; or, Mr. Jorrocks's Hunt* (1843), by Robert Smith Surtees, is a comic novel centering on country life and foxhunting. Guy Griffith and Michael Oakeshott, *A Guide to the Classics* (1936), published by Faber, is indeed subtitled *How to Pick the Derby*.

4. Aeolus: in Greek mythology, the keeper (or, in later versions, god) of the winds. In the *Odyssey* he tries to help Odysseus sail home by confining all winds but the west in a leather bag – a scheme that is thwarted when Odysseus's men open the bag, inadvertenly releasing the winds.

5. William Congreve, *The Way of the World* (1700).

6†. In *Classic*: "an age of development or an age of decay."

7. In his essay on Milton in *Lives of the Poets*, Johnson famously remarks: "Of him, at last, may be said what Jonson says of Spenser, that *he wrote no language*, but has formed what Butler calls a *Babylonish Dialect*, in itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extensive learning the vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity" (*Lives* 76). In "The Classics and the Man of Letters," TSE dubiously attributes to Landor the criticism that Milton wrote "English like a dead language" (6.309, n.3).

8†. In *Classic*: "is (as it thought itself) the finest"

9. In *Aeneid* VI.440-76, Aeneas discovers Dido – whose suicide had followed his abandonment – in the Fields of Mourning. He addresses her shade, but she turns away from him without replying.

10. In the *Aeneid*, Turnus, the leader of the Rutuli and opponent of Aeneas and the Trojans, is doomed, since it is Aeneas's destiny to settle in Italy as the progenitor of the Romans.

11†. In *Classic*: "and we are therefore apt to pay not enough deference to it."

12†. *Classic* includes an additional sentence here: "We may raise a rather different question, when we view Italian poetry after Dante: for the later Italian poets did not imitate Dante, and had this advantage, that they lived in a world which was more rapidly changing, so that there was obviously something different for them to do; they provoke no direct disastrous comparison."

13†. *Classic* includes an additional sentence here: "You may or may not be disposed to accept the distinction which I shall make."

14. OED definition of "provincial"

15. OED example for "provincial," from James Russell Lowell (1865)

16. Cf. "Choruses from *The Rock*," I.15-16: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? / Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" (*CPP* 96; *Poems1* 153).

17. *Purgatorio* XXVII.127-29 (*DC2* 342-43)

TEXTUAL NOTE

In the Virgil Society edition only, TSE's lecture text was preceded by a reprinting [3-4] of the Virgil Society letter and its signatories published in the *TLS* (6.812). The lecture's original introductory paragraph, published in both editions of *What is a Classic?* but omitted from *OPP*, ran as follows:

> In the whole of European literature there is no poet who can furnish the texts for a more significant variety of discourse than Virgil. The fact that he symbolises so much in the history of Europe, and represents such central European values, is the justification for our founding a society to preserve his memory: the fact that he is so central and so comprehensive is my justification for this address. For if Virgil's poetry were a subject upon which only scholars should presume to speak, you would not have put me in this position, or have cared to listen to what I have to say. I am emboldened by the reflection, that no specialised knowledge or proficiency can confer the exclusive title to talk about Virgil. Speakers of the most diverse capacities, can bring his poetry to bear upon matters within their competence; can hope to contribute, from those studies to which they have given their minds, to the elucidation of his value; can try to offer, for the general use, the benefit of whatever wisdom Virgil may have helped them to acquire, in relation to their own experience of life. Each can give his testimony of Virgil in relation to those subjects which he knows best, or upon which he has most deeply reflected: that is what I meant by variety. In the end, we may all be saying the same thing in different ways: and that is what I meant by significant variety.

Outline of a lecture on Edgar Allan Poe

During a hiatus in the German V-1 and V-2 attacks of Sept 1944 to Mar 1945, the Churchill Club – the intellectual gathering place for American servicemen and servicewomen in London – resumed its activities, and TSE was again asked to address the soldiers there on a literary subject. (On the Churchill Club, see the headnote to "Walt Whitman and Modern Poetry" [6.783], delivered in Feb 1944.) He demurred, however, at the proposed topic of Dante, writing to Lady Jane Clark on 6 Sept:

> My impression after talking twice at the Churchill Club was that Whitman was a better subject for the purpose than Milton [6.543]. The former was something they could talk about whereas I had the feeling on the second occasion that they were listening respectfully to a lecture on a subject rather outside of their interest. I don't think that American youths know very much or are very much interested in any literature earlier than the nineteenth century. Perhaps that is not quite a fair way of putting it. I mean rather that their interest in anything earlier is more passive. For this reason I don't think that Dante is a very good subject for me. . . . So I was thinking of talking this time about Edgar Poe. That would be easier, in any case, and would enable me to bring in his influence on French poetry and mention Valéry.[1]

On 25 Oct, he lectured on Poe, speaking from the three-page typescript reproduced here, which was revised from a six-page holograph (Houghton: bMS 1691 [135]). As Donald Gallup notes, in time TSE developed this talk "into the formal lecture given three years later at the Library of Congress and published in 1949 as *From Poe to Valéry*."[2]

At the top of the typescript, TSE has written "Churchill Club 25 October 1945."

Would not venture formal lecture on Poe: one of the most puzzling critical problems in literature. All the more suitable for informal talk followed by discussion. Few general remarks, followed by consideration of one aspect of his importance, which has had more attention in France than here or in America.

No poet has greater reputation on fewer poems: and of these even very few people have read all. But there are three or four which everybody knows. None has been more reticent about himself, or more remote from reality: but none is more individual. You sometimes wonder why his best poems are poetry at all, and not merely doggerel. His other work seems casual and diverse, and mostly written to supply immediate financial needs: yet it has a peculiar unity. He seems to have had little influence on poetry in English, yet his influence, and his anticipation of fields developed by later writers, one of the most remarkable things about him.

His Work. A very small number of short poems.
The Tales and miscellaneous papers.[3]
Three essays on poetry.[4]
Criticism of contemporaries.

His antecedents.

The English romantic poets.
The romantic spook novel.
Coleridge.

Very little is perfectly written. He incessantly verges on the absurd and pretentious. His scholarship nearly humbug. His range of sensibility very limited in his poetry, and little place for direct personal experience in it: on the other hand his intellectual curiosity, the number of subjects on which he was prepared to write, very wide. Sometimes he seems only an actor, or, like Kipling, an author with no particular subject. Hence as with Kipling, effect of tour de force. And yet the elements in Poe's work that appear shoddy or absurd, even the feeble humour, are inseparable from something which leaves a permanent and deep impression.

Poe looks bigger from a distance, when we think of the whole work, than when we examine any one piece in detail. His best poems imperfect, and his worst poems have something in them which makes them different from a bad poem by anybody else. As an artist, he is slipshod, yet he initiated a new conception of the art of poetry. One of his most remarkable and baffling gifts is of writing poetry which just escapes being doggerel jingles, and part of our pleasure is in watching him skate on such thin ice.

Annie. Ulalume.[5] Tamerlane[6]

As a forerunner and as an influence.

Detective fiction. On most detective fiction we can trace two strains, Poe and Wilkie Collins. Collins represented by the fallible or professional detective, usually of Scotland Yard or a New York District Attorney. Poe father of the infallible or amateur detective. Mr. Dupin the original of Sherlock Holmes, who however got his violin from Roderick Usher.[7]

The scientific thriller. Valdemar.[8] The Red Lamp.[9]

Landscape gardening, furniture, etc.[10]

Eureka[11] and Whitehead & Eddington[12]

The spook, and the combination of spookiness & science.[13]

Influence in France.

On Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry. That is to say, on three generations of the most significant movement in poetry in the last 100 years. And his influence not mere inherited: on each of these men individually. Now why was this?

Clearest evidence comes from Valéry, since he was the poet who wrote most about poetry, and about the composition of his own poems. In fact, V.'s poetry, and his writing about poetry, are integrally one work. There are two reasons chiefly:

1. Incantation element.
2. The relation of poetic practice and theory.

Poe's poetry, without his theory of poetry, would hardly have had such a success. The two were taken together.

The Poetic Principle, the Rationale of Verse, the Philosophy of Composition (la genèse d'un poème).[14] Second need not detain us. The first asserts that poem can only be short. The third is the most influential.

Now did Poe compose the "Raven" in that way? If done so deliberately it ought to be a better poem.

But Valéry took it very seriously indeed, and it is part of his "method" to compose his poems in that way. And what Poe started was a new stage of self-consciousness in the writing of poetry.[15]

Social reasons for this: isolation of poet in society, hence art has no purpose beyond itself. Lack of convictions beyond art – pure scepticism in which ideas are not so much believed in, as entertained and analysed.

Principles of this poetry[16]

A poem is in a sense about itself.[17]

The pleasure for the author is in the consciousness of the process by which he arrives at it. For the reader, in following the progress of the author's mind through his idiom.

Preoccupation with language. A poem is not written about a philosophical subject; the philosophy is in the elaboration of the poem.

Ideas of scientific method. But science here becomes identical with magic – a conscious incantation with no purpose except to produce a state.

The desire of the poet to be completely conscious of what he is doing, and to do nothing of which he is not completely conscious. On Valéry's theory, form and content should be so organically one, that if the content be given, a particular form imposes itself; but also, if a form be given, a particular content must follow. (Individual form.)

Art for art's sake: the really serious doctrine is in Mallarmé and Valéry, not in Pater, Wilde, etc. Leads to paradox: that the author is greater than his work – new emphasis on author, different from the older romantic (Byron). For the work is not in relation to anything outside itself to which it renders homage.

Analogy with logical positivism.

We are now at a stage of crisis in poetry: this method has gone as far as it can. But any other method consciously held would lead us just as much astray: e.g., a theory that poetry ought to have some accepted subject matter or support a religious, philosophical or political scheme. Perhaps a tragedy of self-consciousness. Just as we think we want a political philosophy, but what we really want are the unconscious assumptions and convictions underlying a political philosophy; and the conscious cannot do the work of the unconscious. As for Valéry's theory, the truth, it seems to me, is that a good poem should present a question to which there is no answer. We should be able to look at it in one aspect, in which it appears that the author used his powers of language as for the means of saying something; and in another, in which it appears that the author's subject was merely a pretext which gave him the opportunity of writing a poem. But every theory is bad unless the poet has the power of doing things which are NOT comprehended by the theory.

NOTES

1. See TSE's unpublished "Homage to Paul Valéry" (6.653), his immediate response to Valéry's death on 20 July 1945.

2. "Mr. Eliot at the Churchill Club," *The Southern Review*, 21 (1985), 973.

3. In addition to more than seventy short stories, Poe published a great deal of miscellaneous prose on literary topics. A number of these pieces are included in the Everyman's Library edition TSE owned, *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe, with a Selection of Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1927).

4. I.e., "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846), "The Rationale of Verse" (1848), and "The Poetic Principle" (1850) – the major essays in which Poe formulates his theory of poetry.

5. TSE remarked on Poe's incantatory technique in "Ulalume" as early as his 1926 "Note sur Mallarmé et Poe" (2.846). In "'A Dream within a Dream': T. S. Eliot on Edgar Allan Poe," a 1943 broadcast, he writes of "For Annie" that it "has an effect of simplicity, even of artlessness, in its metre and diction, which is peculiar to Poe"; and of "Ulalume" that it illustrates Poe's "power of *incantation*" (6.360).

6. Holograph insertion in left margin. "Tamerlane" is a long poem from early in Poe's career (1827), in contrast with the later short lyrics TSE mentions.

7. Poe's character C. Auguste Dupin, generally considered the first fictional detective, appears in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842), and "The Purloined Letter" (1844). In "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), Roderick plays "wild improvisations," though on a guitar rather than a violin; Sherlock Holmes plays a Stradivarius with similarly eccentric proficiency.

8. Holograph insertion, left margin. In "From Poe to Valéry," TSE posits that "H. G. Wells, in his early romances of scientific exploration and invention, owed much to the stimulus of

some of Poe's narratives – *Gordon Pym*, or 'A Descent into the Maelstrom' for example, or 'The Facts in the Case of Monsieur Valdemar.'"

9. Holograph insertion. *The Red Lamp* (1925), a supernatural mystery by Mary Roberts Rinehart. TSE mentions her 1908 novel *The Circular Staircase* in "Sherlock Holmes and His Times" (1929), though he misattributes its authorship to Anna Katharine Green (3.605).

10. TSE probably has in mind Poe's stories "The Landscape Garden" (1842), "The Domain of Arnheim" (1846), and "Landor's Cottage" (1848) – closely related tales focusing on the aesthetics of landscape – and his essay on interior decoration, "The Philosophy of Furniture" (1840).

11. *Eureka* (1848), a long metaphysical and cosmological essay – or, according to its subtitle, prose poem. In "From Poe to Valéry," TSE refers to *Eureka* as "that cosmological fantasy which makes no deep impression upon most of us, because we are aware of Poe's lack of qualification in philosophy, theology or natural science, but which Valéry, after Baudelaire, esteemed highly as a 'prose poem.'" TSE discusses Valéry's response to *Eureka* at greater length in "Edgar Poe et la France" (1948).

12. In *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (1940), A. H. Quinn argued that *Eureka* intuitively anticipated modern cosmology, invoking several statements on the latter by the astrophysicist Sir Arthur Eddington. On being shown this analysis prior to its publication, Eddington wrote a balanced response partly affirming Quinn's conclusions, which Quinn then included in his book. Whether TSE knew of this direct connection between Eddington and *Eureka* is unknown. Elsewhere, however, he invokes Eddington and Alfred North Whitehead together as figures popularly believed to exemplify a rapprochement between contemporary science and religion. Although TSE treats this view skeptically – in "Religion without Humanism" he calls it a "delusion" (4.38-39) – he may yet have noted resemblances between Poe's theories in *Eureka* and the modern scientific outlook expounded by Whitehead and Eddington.

13. TSE's one-word holograph insertion above this line is illegible.

14. In 1859, Baudelaire published his translations of Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" and "The Raven," together with some commentary of his own, as "Genèse d'un poème" [The Genesis of a Poem].

15. In "From Poe to Valéry," TSE finds in the French modernist the "culmination" of Poe's "notion that the composition of a poem should be as conscious and deliberate as possible, that the poet should observe himself in the act of composition – and this, in a mind as sceptical as Valéry's, leads to the conclusion . . . that the act of composition is more interesting than the poem which results from it" (*TCC* 40).

16. Holograph insertion with bracket in left margin including the next five paragraphs under it.

17. Above this line TSE inserts an illegible word followed by the number 162.

Mass Deportations[1]

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (30 Oct 1945) 5

Sir, – In his rejoinder to Lord Russell, Mr. J. H. Flexman makes three points none of which seems to me effective.[2]

First, he says that Lord Russell produces no evidence. But there was no need for Lord Russell to recapitulate what we have all read in the Press; it was rather for Mr. Flexman to prove that the published reports are false or exaggerated. In an ancient work of Indian philosophy one of the grounds of legitimate belief is given as "universal report: as, when all the people say, 'there is a devil in that fig-tree.'"[3] Is Mr. Flexman prepared to deny that there is a devil in the fig-tree?

Second, Mr. Flexman holds that it is just to deport Germans to Germany – even if they have never lived there, and even if they starve when they get there; and he implies[4] (producing no evidence whatever in support of his statement) that the conditions under which these involuntary migrants live compare favourably with those of the slave labourers in Germany during the war. Finally, he accuses Lord Russell of "casting aspersions on his own countrymen." This misuse of the word "aspersion" suggests that Mr. Flexman has not quite grasped the meaning of social responsibility.[5]

Yours, & c.,
T. S. ELIOT

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1

NOTES

[1] TSE dates this letter 27 Oct and includes the title in the heading.

[2] In a letter to the *Times* of 23 Oct 1945, Russell decried the systematic expulsion of ethnic Germans by the USSR and Poland from territories Germany had annexed and from elsewhere in Eastern Europe: "[M]ass deportations are being carried out by our allies on an unprecedented scale, and an apparently deliberate attempt is being made to exterminate many millions of Germans . . . by depriving them of their homes and of food, leaving them to die by slow and agonized starvation" (5). He went on to compare these deportations with the Nazis' deportations of Jews to the death camps and to condemn British acquiescence as hypocritical.

John Henry Flexman (1873-1950), a retired English insurance businessman and sometime Liberal Party functionary, responded on 26 Oct, suggesting that Russell's claims were hyperbolic: "He produces no evidence whatever in support of his statement, and he appears to have overlooked the fact that these Germans are being deported to Germany, whereas the victims of the Nazis were deported to foreign countries to serve as slave labour under terrible conditions of hardship. The hardships of the Germans will not be alleviated by exaggeration and casting aspersions on one's own countrymen" (5).

The number of ethnic Germans who died as a result of the expulsions is still debated, with estimates ranging from approximately 500,000 to more than 2,000,000.

3. From TSE's carbon, *read*: "*all* the people say"

The folk belief that each fig tree is inhabited by a *yaksha* (nature spirit or demon) is a standard example of *aitihya* (usually translated as "rumor" or "tradition") in Indian philosophy. All philosophical schools but one reject *aitihya* as a *pramāṇa* (means of valid knowledge). The one exception, the Paurāṇikas, are said to have accepted *aitihya*, but they left behind no text on the subject. Thus, regardless of which "ancient work" TSE has in mind, it will almost certainly have concluded that universal report (*aitihya*), as exemplified by the devil (*yaksha*) in the fig tree, is *not* one of the grounds of legitimate belief (*pramāṇas*).

4. From TSE's carbon, *read*: "and he *implies*"

5. Russell followed up in the *Times* to defend his position on 31 Oct, and the filmmaker and film critic Ivor Montagu wrote in support of Flexman on 1 Nov. Neither Russell's nor Montagu's letter refers to TSE's.

Meaning of Culture

To the Editor of *The Times Educational Supplement*

The Times Educational Supplement (10 Nov 1945) 535

Sir, – Your leading article of October 27, devoted to an international meeting in London to consider the establishment of a United Nations' Educational and Cultural Organization, is entitled "A Momentous Conference."[1]

So indeed it may prove to be: and at a period when momentous conferences follow each other thick and fast, we may fail to pay sufficient attention to its proceedings.

There is one point about this conference which arouses my misgiving: it is that neither in the official document convening the conference (which you published some little time ago), nor in any notice in the Press, have I seen any suggestion that the term *cultural* needs to be defined.[2] The first task of a cultural organization should be to consider how far "culture" is susceptible of "organization"; and this question is peculiarly urgent at a time when the cultural organisms of Europe are either destroyed or in process of destruction. The opportunities for getting lost in a verbal labyrinth without issue, when the representatives of 37 nations have assembled to draw conclusions from unexamined premises, are unlimited.[3]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The article recounts the growth in 1944 of an American proposal, spearheaded by J. William Fulbright, into an ambitious draft constitution for an organization that would "devote its energies in the first instance to the emergency work of rehabilitating national educational systems and cultural institutions which had been destroyed or undermined by the Axis Powers, but that ultimately . . . should develop into a permanent body with broader aims and activities" (511). Despite the many diplomatic stumbling blocks also highlighted in the article, the so-called ECO/CONF, which met in London, 1-16 Nov 1945, eventuated in the founding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

2. On 4 Aug, the *TES* published "the text of a draft constitution for an educational and cultural organization of the United Nations to be discussed at a conference of representatives of the United Nations to be held in London in November" (365). TSE would later quote the first article of this document, outlining the purposes of the organization, in *NTDC*, commenting: "I am not at the moment concerned to extract a meaning from these sentences: I only quote them

to call attention to the word *culture*, and to suggest that before acting on such resolutions we should try to find out what this one word means."

3. Of the forty-four nations represented at ECO/CONF, thirty-seven agreed to participate in UNESCO and signed its constitution.

Shortly after writing to the *TES*, TSE received a letter from his American friend Horace Kallen, suggesting that he try to meet an acquaintance, Bryn J. Hovde, who was a technical secretary in the American delegation. "As the information made public about this conference seems pretty meagre," TSE replied on 9 Nov, "I should be particularly interested to meet Mr. Hovde and if he has time to see me I should be delighted to ask him to lunch or dinner." He wrote to Hovde immediately, but there is no evidence of their meeting. His attempts to see Archibald MacLeish, a leader of the American delegation, were frustrated as well.

On 17 Nov, the *TES* published a response to TSE's letter in which the pseudonymous correspondent "Taugamma" suggests ironically that TSE is "hewing at the roots of our civilization" by questioning whether culture can be governmentally organized. The entire system of education, Taugamma claims, "is based upon the organization of culture and upon a particular form of organization proceeding from the top downwards"; to change this would require us to reject the idea that "'authorities' of all kinds" are the only "people who matter" (547).

Autobiographical summary

On 21 Aug 1945, as *Sommes-nous encore en chrétienté?*– the French edition of *The Idea of a Christian Society* (6.701) – approached publication, Jean-Louis Duchêne, Secrétaire général of Les Presses de Belgique, wrote the Faber and Faber offices requesting "as many [sic] biographical information about the Author as possible; we need them as well for a short Introduction as for our launching adverts and prospectuses." On 12 Sept TSE sent "a copy of the information about myself in the current *Who's Who*" (6.245). This response elicited a plea from the translator, Albert Frank-Duquesne, who found the *Who's Who* entry "decidedly insufficient" for his task of writing "a 'notice biographique'":

> **First, the list of books is not complete; then, there is nothing to define or characterize their contents; next, nothing at all gives us a sketch of the evolution of your ideas and interests. I have been reading, for instance, in a French paper – re: *Murder in the Cathedral* – that Eliot has passed through Indian metaphysics before reaching Anglocatholicism. Well, that is – at least to me – a very interesting and arresting piece of news. . . .**

TSE responded to Frank-Duquesne on 5 Nov: "I enclose a couple of pages of the biographical note for which you ask. I am afraid it may not be what you want. I am no autobiographer and although I found my life interesting enough I have not the gift for making it interesting to others. It will at least perhaps provide you with a clue to a few of the turning points." Frank-Duquesne drew heavily on this document in his introduction to *Sommes-nous encore en chrétienté?*

My family, since its removal from England in 1669, has always been settled in or near Boston, Massachusetts. It has therefore been associated for some generations with the Unitarian sect and with Harvard University. My grandfather, as a minister of Unitarianism, went out to St. Louis, Missouri in 1837 to found the first Unitarian church west of the Mississippi River: but though he was extremely active in public life there, and amongst other activities founded a local university, Boston remains the family foyer.[1] The seventeenth-century background is of course strongly Puritan-Calvinistic.

I spent my early years in St. Louis, was later at school in Massachusetts and at Harvard.[2] My interests there were chiefly literary, and as an undergraduate at Harvard I began to write verse under the influence of Baudelaire and Laforgue, and read widely among other French poetry.[3] On taking my degree at Harvard I spent a year in Paris, following lectures at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France, and fell under the influence of Bergson.[4] I returned to Harvard to study philosophy, with the intention of making my career in that pursuit. I also took up the study of Sanskrit and Pali, as Indian thought had always had a strong attraction for me; and I thought of proceeding to the study of comparative religion. At this period the influence of Bergson was succeeded by the influence of F. H. Bradley.[5] Consequently, I spent a year at Oxford working on Plato and Aristotle under Bradley's greatest disciple, Harold Joachim.[6] But for the outbreak of war in 1914 I should probably have spent some time also in Germany studying Greek philosophy; and I was attracted at that time by the work of such philosophers as Husserl and Meinong.

I had never been able to get any of my verse published; and the first recognition I received was from Mr. Ezra Pound, whom I met in London in 1915.[7] This encouragement turned my mind to poetry again; and on ending my year at Oxford I remained in London. For a time I was a schoolmaster, then for eight years in a bank in the City.[8] During this period my interests were exclusively literary, though I occasionally reviewed philosophical books. My first book of verse appeared in 1917, and my first volume of literary essays in 1920.[9] I joined the newly formed publishing firm of Faber & Gwyer (since, Faber & Faber) in 1925.

I had always had a lively interest in anthropology and the study of religions. The early work of Maritain made a deep impression on me, and I began heading discursively in theology.[10] In 1927 I was received into the Church of England. My interest in Christian sociology has developed since that time, partly through association with the Christendom group of writers, and partly through association with the activities of Dr. J. H. Oldham.[11] In more recent years still, I have interested myself in political philosophy, and have returned to the reading of Edmund Burke. I was naturalized as a British subject in 1927. My chief function is to write verse, and verse plays, and to publish the poetry of other writers: everything else I do is a Nebenfach.[12] My theological standpoint is that of what is called the "Anglo-Catholic" movement in the Church of England.

NOTES

1. William Greenleaf Eliot, who moved from Boston to St. Louis in 1834, played a central role in the founding of Washington University in 1853. The Eliot family maintained their New England ties and kept a summer house in Gloucester, Massachusetts, about forty miles northeast

of Boston; see TSE's recollections in his preface to *This American World*, by Edgar Ansel Mowrer (3.490).

2. TSE attended Milton Academy in 1905-06 before entering Harvard as a freshman.

3. On TSE's discovery of the French Symbolists, see his 1930 review of *Baudelaire and the Symbolists* (4.11); "What France Means to You" (6.512-13); and his 1950 talk on Dante, collected in *TCC* as "What Dante Means to Me."

4. In Paris for the 1910-11 academic year, TSE underwent what in his 1948 Magdalene College sermon he would call a "temporary conversion to Bergsonism."

5. TSE's writings on Bradley include "A Prediction in Regard to Three English Authors" (2.513), "Francis Herbert Bradley" (3.304), and his doctoral dissertation, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (1.238).

6. Of Joachim, with whom he studied at Merton College in 1915-16, TSE remarked in 1938: "To him I owe not only whatever knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle I may have once possessed but also whatever command of prose style I may still possess" (5.646). He would again acknowledge Joachim's teaching in the published edition of his dissertation (1.239).

7. TSE actually met Pound on 22 Sept 1914.

8. TSE taught at High Wycombe Grammar School and Highgate Junior School in 1915-16 before joining the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyds Bank in 1917.

9. I.e., *Prufrock and Other Observations* and *The Sacred Wood*.

10. Asked in 1949 about his regard for Maritain, TSE told interviewer Ranjee Shahani in *John O'London's Weekly* (19 Aug, 497-98) that he "filled an important role in our generation by uniting philosophy and theology, and also by enlarging the circle of readers who regard Christian philosophy seriously."

11. Led by Maurice Reckitt, the Christendom Group focused on Christian social thinking; its members included V. A. Demant, George Every, Ruth Kenyon, Dorothy Sayers, R. H. Tawney, and William Temple in addition to TSE. The "activities of Dr. J. H. Oldham" with which TSE was associated included the Moot and the *CN-L*.

12. *Nebenfach* (German): a subsidiary course of university study – in the United States, a minor.

Preface to *Sommes-nous encore en chrétienté?*

by T. S. Eliot; trans. Albert Frédérik[1]

Brussels: Les Presses de Belgique, 1946. Pp. 152; Preface, 1-6.

Ces conférences ont été prononcées pendant l'hiver de 1939, si lourd de menaces, et publiées peu après la déclaration de guerre. Vaut-il la peine de les reproduire en 1946, cette fois en traduction française ? Lecteur, sois-en juge ![2]

Il peut paraître actuellement si chimérique de réaliser une société chrétienne que, pour d'aucuns, le simple examen de sa notion semble déjà un vain gaspillage de temps. Cependant, les événements consécutifs à la parution de mon texte en 1939 n'impliquent en rien, j'ose le dire, qu'il faille le modifier. Aussi bien, n'avais-je pas pour but, en cet essai, de prédire l'avenir, ni même d'élaborer des projets en partant des données fournies par l'année même où j'écrivais. Ma tentative s'est modestement bornée à définir ce qu'on entend par une « société chrétienne ». J'ai voulu, pour ma propre édification, me représenter ce que serait notre société, si vraiment elle était chrétienne. Et par là, j'entends, non pas une communauté parfaite, comme le monde n'en a jamais connu, ni davantage tel passé devenu mythique à force d'idéalisation, mais tout bonnement une société chrétienne comme au temps où toute la chrétienté d'Occident acceptait, en matière de foi doctrinale et d'organisation ecclésiastique, la même autorité.[3‡] Mes vues sont-elles justes ou erronées, précieuses ou vaines ? De toute façon, elles sont d'un autre ordre que les aperçus tirant, des événements survenus depuis six années, un surcroît d'évidence ou tout l'inverse.

— Mais . . .

. . . Je l'escomptais, ce *mais*, lecteur, et j'avais préparé ma réponse : c'est qu'en cet ouvrage, je ne me suis préoccupé que de la situation religieuse en Angleterre. J'entends : directement, de plein fouet. . . De tout ce que contient cet opuscule, rien ne s'applique directement aux États-Unis, voire même à l'Écosse, moins encore à l'Europe continentale. C'est au seuil même de ce travail que je me suis imposé ces limites. Analyser la notion de *société chrétienne* dans l'abstrait, sans référence pratique à tel pays donné, m'eût fait courir le risque de généraliser dans le vague, au point qu'en fait mes principes n'eussent été susceptibles d'application concrète en quelque endroit que ce fût. On me dira que j'eusse dû, peut-être, étendre mon étude à tous les pays de tradition chrétienne ; mais, outre qu'un pareil labeur eût de loin dépassé mes capacités – car, pour comprendre la situation religieuse d'un pays donné, il faut en connaître intimement l'histoire – il en serait résulté une manière d'encyclopédie, où la surabondance profuse des détails eût masqué les grandes lignes de faîte.

J'ai donc préféré m'en tenir au pays dont je puis parler avec un minimum d'assurance. Au lecteur de « transposer » judicieusement mes vues, ma « thèse », d'en restreindre la portée générale aux dimensions d'un cas national, d'une « hypothèse » particulière. Certes, en Angleterre, les rapports entre l'Église et l'État ni ne sont ni n'ont jamais été semblables à ce qu'ils sont en tout autre pays d'Europe ou d'Amérique, et les caractéristiques de notre *Establishment*[4†] peuvent le faire tenir, par un seul et même observateur, soit pour une excellente institution, soit pour un indéfendable pis-aller, né d'un compromis. Seulement, dans cet essai, je me contente de prendre l'Église anglicane telle quelle. . .

Il ne faudrait toutefois pas supposer que la notion de « société chrétienne » est, à mes yeux, susceptible de réalisation dans un seul pays. Certes, c'est une excellente institution qu'une Église nationale, mais dans la seule mesure où elle se tient elle-même pour l'organe, sur un territoire donné, d'une Église transcendante aux valeurs nationales. Sinon, toutes les déviations de la pratique gouvernementale, et toutes les aberrations de l'opinion et du sentiment nationaux, ne manqueront pas d'influer sur elle. Par contre, s'il existe quelque part une Église nationale, je ne crois pas qu'il soit judicieux de la « mettre au pas », d'en niveler le statut, de la confondre en fait – comme l'une d'elles – avec les sectes, reconnues ou non par l'État au même titre qu'elle. J'estime qu'une société chrétienne doit être une, parmi toute une communauté de sociétés chrétiennes.[5†] En bref : je crois à l'idée de chrétienté.

Dernière remarque : cet essai relève de la sociologie plutôt que de la théologie.[6†] Je suis un homme de lettres, non pas un théologien. Mais je suis persuadé que la base indispensable de toute *culture*, c'est la *religion*, que la foi chrétienne est la vraie, et que par conséquent la meilleure des cultures est la chrétienne. Dès lors, si nous voyons dans le christianisme plus que le précieux « dépôt » confié au « petit troupeau » pour qu'il l'enfouisse solitairement au sein d'une société mécréante ; si notre religion doit illuminer et sanctifier la vie du peuple tout entier : il lui faut s' « incarner », s'incorporer dans la culture de ce peuple, l'imprégner, la saturer, l' « informer » et la pénétrer jusqu'en ses plus « insignifiants » détails, jusqu'à son plus humble niveau. Il faut que ce « levain » fasse « monter toute la pâte ».

Mais, d'autre part, jamais la foi chrétienne ne peut *s'identifier* à la culture de tel peuple en particulier. En fait, pour qu'il y ait une culture spécifiquement chrétienne au sein d'une nation restée fidèle à la foi traditionnelle, il faut qu'il existe en-dehors d'elle d'autres sociétés chrétiennes, qu'elles aient ensemble une vie commune, qu'elles reconnaissent ensemble la même autorité spirituelle, transcendante aux nations. Dans un essai que les troubles des trois dernières années m'ont empêché d'achever, j'ai commencé d'esquisser les conditions essentielles de la culture et ses rapports avec la religion.[7] Eh bien, je suis de plus en plus convaincu que, seul, notre christianisme commun peut synthétiser toutes les réalités nationales, fédérer, harmoniser les peuples en un tout qui laisse à chaque culture nationale son intégrité et lui assure la possibilité d'inoculer aux autres un sang nouveau. Cette communauté religieuse et « culturelle » doit avoir son centre d'expansion là même où, dans les siècles passés, pour loin qu'elle soit restée de son but, elle s'en est tout de même relativement le plus approchée : en Europe, *ce petit cap*, dit à peu près Valéry, *sur la côte occidentale de l'Asie*.[8]

Voulons-nous conserver ne fût-ce qu'un atome d'espoir ? Alors, en l'heure présente, il y faut ni plus ni moins que la foi chrétienne. L'Angleterre peut contribuer à justifier cette espérance, et la moindre raison n'en est pas sa situation de « charnière » entre les deux Europes : catholique et protestante.[9‡] Cette pensée me réconforte quelque peu au moment où j'offre, à mes lecteurs de langue française, cet essai limité quant à ses dimensions physiques et aussi bref en sa présentation que limité dans la variété de ses objets.

TH. S. ELIOT

ORIGINAL TYPESCRIPT

Whether this series of public lectures, delivered in the ominous winter of 1939, and published shortly after the outbreak of war, is worthy of appearing in a French translation in 1946, the reader will judge for himself.[2] The possibility of realising a Christian society may now appear so remote, that to consider the idea of such a society may seem an idle waste of time. However that may be, I can say that what I wrote in 1939 does not seem to me to require revision in the light of subsequent events. I was not, in this essay, concerned with prediction, or with planning for any future on the basis of the situation in the year in which I wrote. What I attempted was a modest essay in definition of the term "Christian Society": an attempt to make clearer to myself what our society would be like if it was truly

Christian, not in a perfected state beyond anything the world has ever known, and not in the guise of any idealised period of the past; but what it would be like if it were Christian simply to the same degree as in the ages when the whole of Western Christendom accepted the same authority of faith and order.[3‡] Whether my views are true or false, valuable or useless, they are not of the kind that can be verified or disproved by the events of the last six years.

One criticism which may occur to the reader's mind, I shall attempt to answer in advance. In this essay I have concerned myself directly with the religious situation of England only. Nothing that I say is directly applicable to the United States of America, or even to Scotland; still less to countries on the continent of Europe. I decided upon this limitation at the beginning of my task. To have talked of a "Christian society" without having any particular country in mind, would have been to risk generalisations so large that they would have seemed of very little application to any country in particular. To have considered the situation in every country of Christian formation, would not only have been beyond my powers – for to understand the religious situation in any country demands an intimate knowledge of its history – but would have resulted in a very large book, in which the general scheme would have been lost in details. It seemed best, therefore, to limit myself to the country about which I could speak with some confidence; and leave the intelligent reader to his own adjustments, and apply if he will the general conclusions to a different particular case. Certainly, the relations between Church and State are different in England from what they are or have been in any other country of Europe or the New World; and the peculiarities of our "Establishment"[4‡] are such that it may appear, to one and the same observer, either an excellent institution or an indefensible compromise. But in this essay, I merely take the Church of England as I find it.

I should, however, not wish the reader to suppose that I think of a "Christian society" as something which could be achieved in one country in isolation. I think that a national church is a good thing, only so far as it considers itself a local part of a supranational church, for otherwise it is exposed to every corruption of government, and every aberration of national thinking and feeling; but where a national church exists, I do not find that the proper solution is to reduce it to the status of one among other equally recognised or unrecognised sects. I believe that a Christian society should be one among a communion of Christian societies:[5‡] in other words, I believe in the idea of Christendom.

Finally, I should remark that this essay belongs to the area of sociology rather than of theology.[6‡] I am a man of letters and not a theologian. I assume that a religion is the necessary foundation of a culture; I assume that the Christian faith is the true faith, and that therefore the best culture is a Christian culture. And, if Christianity is to be more than the carefully guarded treasure of a small minority in an otherwise faithless society, if it is to illuminate and sanctify the life of the whole people, then it must incorporate itself in that people's culture, inform and penetrate that culture in minute detail and to its humblest level. And on the other hand, the Christian Faith can never identify itself with the culture of any particular people. Indeed, the existence of other Christian societies, and the communication with other Christian societies, and the common allegiance to supranational spiritual authority is the condition of the culture of any people remaining Christian. In an essay which the difficulties of the last three years have until now prevented me from completing, I attempt to determine the essential conditions of culture, and to carry further some account of its relation to religion.[7] I remain convinced that it is only through our common Christianity that the nations can be harmonised in a whole in which each national culture will preserve its integrity and at the same time invigorate other cultures; that this community of religion and civilisation must spread from the place where – however imperfectly – it came nearest to realisation in the past – from Europe: "that little cape," as Valéry said somewhere, "on the western coast of Asia."[8] Nothing less than Christian faith is necessary, at this present hour, if we are to preserve any hope at all. I think that England has its own contribution to make towards this hope, not least because of its intermediate position between Catholic and Protestant Europe:[9‡] and that thought somewhat reassures me in offering this short and limited essay to those who will read it in its French translation.

NOTES

1. In 1946, *ICS* was published in French as *Sommes-nous encore en chrétienté?* [*Are We Still in Christendom?*] by Les Presses de Belgique. TSE approved, with reservations, this change of title, writing the publisher on 12 Oct 1945, "I have no objection to your altering the title as you suggest, though it seems to me that it might be nearer to the meaning of the book if it also had some reference to the future, i.e., *Can There Still be a Christendom?*"

On 10 Oct TSE suggested to the publisher "that it would be suitable if I wrote a short preface for your French edition, emphasising the date at which the book was written and the limitations of its scope from my present point of view. I think such a preface need not be of any length but might help to justify the publication of a translation seven years after the appearance of the book." The preface, dated 11 Nov, appeared as "Préface spéciale pour l'édition française." The original English text, printed here below the published French translation, has survived as an untitled four-page typescript.

In a letter of 21 Aug, Jean-Louis Duchêne, Secrétaire général of Les Presses de Belgique, described the translator, without disclosing his name, as "a Roman Catholic who has kept in close touch since many years with things and people Anglican, having lived himself in England." With TSE's consent, the translator added footnotes explaining terms and references that he believed French-speaking readers would find obscure. Five such notes were attached to the preface and are indicated below by double daggers (‡).

Subsequently, the Belgian writer Albert Frank-Duquesne (1896-1955) introduced himself to TSE as the translator. He explained on 17 Oct that he was "a Roman Catholic of Jewish descent [who] left the Church about 1926" and committed himself in turn to Theosophy, Hinduism, and Greek Orthodox Christianity before returning around 1940 to Roman Catholicism. In 1941 Frank-Duquesne was interned for several months by the Nazis in the Breedonk concentration camp for a 1937 remark that Hitler and Stalin were "tous deux fidèles larbins de l'Antéchrist" [both loyal minions of the Antichrist]. For *Sommes-nous encore en chrétienté?*, he used the pseudonym Albert Frédérik – a practice he did not continue in subsequent publications.

2. *ICS* originated in TSE's Boutwood Lectures, given in Mar 1939 at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (5.683).

3‡. Translator's note: "« Foi doctrinale et organisation ecclésiastique. » Le texte original porte : *Faith and Order* ; l'expression, clichée en anglais pour designer le « mouvement œcuménique » qui prolonge sur le plan théologique et canonique l'action sociale du mouvement *Life and Work* (Vie et Action) se réfère donc au formulaire doctrinal et à l'organisation de l'Église. On sait que nombre d'Anglicans admettraient d'être « guidés » par Rome (*leadership*), si « les » Églises faisaient cause commune pour réaliser pratiquement l'Évangile dans la vie « laïque ». Mais l'auteur évoque ici l'unité doctrinale et organique du Moyen Age." ["Doctrinal faith and ecclesiastical organization." The original text uses the expression "Faith and Order," a cliché in English used to designate the "ecumenical movement" that extends on the theological and canonical plane the social action of the Life and Work movement; therefore it refers to the doctrinal form and to the organization of the Church. We know that many Anglicans would admit to being "guided" by Rome, if the Churches made common cause to realize the Gospel practically in "secular" life. But the author evokes here the doctrinal and organic unity of the Middle Ages.] Parallel groups within post–World War I ecumenism, the Life and Work movement and the Faith and Order movement would merge in 1948 to create the World Council of Churches.

4‡. Translator's note: "Dès 1562, les Trente-Neuf Articles étaient promulgués *for the* establishing *of consent concerning true religion*; la « Déclaration de Sa Majesté », qui les précédait, visait « la doctrine et la discipline de l'Église d'Angleterre, maintenant *établie* ». En fait, le verbe *to establish* connote la stabilisation, la confirmation, l'affermissement définitif. C'est en ce sens qu'il faut entendre, après une longue période d'incohérence et d'anarchie, l'*Establishment* anglican, par lequel Elisabeth a voulu assurer à son pays, par un « acte de conformité », un statut durable et pacifiant. Ce n'est que subsidiairement qu'on peut attribuer à l'Establishment anglican le sens purement matériel, en quelque sorte, d' « institution », de corps *constitué*." [The Thirty-Nine Articles have been promulgated since 1562 "for the *establishing* of consent concerning true religion"; the "Declaration of His Majesty," which preceded them, concerned "the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England now *established*." In effect, the verb *to establish* suggests stabilization, confirmation, and definitive consolidation. It is in this sense that we must understand the Anglican *establishment*, after a long period of inconsistency and anarchy, by which Elizabeth wanted to secure for her country, through an "Act of Uniformity," a lasting and pacifying statute. Only secondarily can one attribute to the "Anglican establishment" the purely material sense, as it were, of "institution" or *constituted* body.]

Drafted by the Canterbury Convention in 1562 and subsequently revised, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion define the basic doctrine of the Church of England. The "Declaration of His Majesty" was that of King Charles I in 1628; it thus followed (not preceded) the Thirty-Nine Articles and affirms that those articles "contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's word." The Act of Uniformity, passed in 1559, restored the liturgy and ritual practices that had obtained under Edward VI, before Queen Mary's rapprochement with Rome.

5‡. Translator's note: "Le texte original prête à confusion : *a Christian society should be one among a communion of Christian societies*. Littéralement : une société chrétienne devrait être une, parmi une communion de sociétés chrétiennes. Le sens le plus évident me semble être qu'en dépit de la multitude des groupements religieux se réclamant du christianisme, il ne devrait y avoir en fait sur terre qu'une seule société chrétienne. Le double emploi du mot *society* suscite ici l'équivoque." [The original text is open to confusion. . . . It means, literally, a Christian society should be one among a communion of Christian societies. The most obvious meaning seems to me that despite the multitude of religious groups claiming to represent Christianity, there should be but one single Christian society on earth. The double usage of the word "society" creates ambiguity here.]

6‡. Translator's note: "Ici, l'auteur se rencontre avec l'expert le plus qualifié, en Belgique, dans le domaine de l' « unionisme ». Rentré en novembre 1945 d'une assez longue tournée en Grande-Bretagne, dans les milieux anglicans et orthodoxes, ce très éminent religieux écrivait ces mots au traducteur du présent livre : « Ma conclusion, c'est que le mouvement unioniste peut arriver facilement à de bons résultats, et l'Église catholique y prendre part utilement, si l'effort œcuménique reste sur le terrain de *Life and Work*. La parole est donc actuellement aux sociologues, les théologiens ne doivent la prendre que plus tard ». La rencontre était trop troublante pour n'être pas ici signalée." [Here the author agrees with the most qualified Belgian expert in the area of "unionism." After returning in November 1945 from a fairly long tour in Britain, in Anglican and orthodox circles, this very eminent clergyman wrote these words to the translator of the present book: "My conclusion is that the unionist movement can easily achieve good results, and the Catholic Church can play a useful part, if the ecumenical effort remains in the field of Life and Work. The conversation thus currently belongs to the sociologists; the theologians must not take part in it until later." The parallel was too unsettling not to be reported here.]

7. I.e., *NTDC*.

8. In "La Crise de l'esprit" (1919), Valéry asked: "L'Europe deviendra-t-elle *ce qu'elle est en réalité*, c'est-à-dire: un petit cap du continent asiatique?" [Will Europe become *what in reality it is*, that is to say, a small promontory of the Asian continent?] *Variété* (Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1924), 23.

9‡. Translator's note: "On se rappellera la prédiction de Joseph de Maistre à propos du rôle mitoyen et médiateur de l'Anglicanisme : si jamais l'union doit se faire, disait-il en substance, l'initiative partira de l'Église d'Angleterre." [One will recall Joseph de Maistre's prediction about the mitigating and mediating role of Anglicanism: if ever the union should come about, he said in substance, the initiative will come from the Church of England.]

In his best-known work, *Considérations sur la France* (1797), Maistre writes, "Si jamais les chrétiens se rapprochent, comme tout les y invite, il semble que la *motion* doit partir de l'église de l'Angleterre." [If Christians are ever to unite, as everything urges them to do, it seems that the *impetus* must come from the Church of England.] *Considérations sur la France* (Lyon: M. P. Rusand, 1834), 32.

Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur[1]

Berlin: Carl Habel Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1946. Pp. 64.

I

This is the first time that I have ever addressed a German-speaking audience, and before speaking on such a large subject, I think that I should present my credentials.[2†] For the unity of European culture is a very large subject indeed, and no one should try to speak about it, unless he has some particular knowledge or experience. Then he should start from that knowledge and experience and show what bearing it has on the general subject. I am a poet and a critic of poetry; I was also, from 1922 to 1939, the editor of a quarterly review.[3] In this first talk I shall try to show what the first of these two professions has to do with my subject, and what conclusions my experience has led me to draw. So this is a series of talks about the unity of European culture from the point of view of a man of letters.

It has often been claimed that English, of all the languages of modern Europe, is the richest for the purposes of writing poetry. I think that this claim is justified. But please notice that when I say "richest for the purposes of writing poetry" I have been careful in my words: I do *not* mean that England has produced the greatest poets, or the greatest amount of great poetry. That is another question altogether. There are as great poets in other languages: Dante is certainly greater than Milton, and at least as great as Shakespeare. And even for the quantity of great poetry, I am not concerned to maintain that England has produced more. I simply say that the English language is the most remarkable medium for the poet to play with. It has the largest vocabulary: so large, that the command of it by any one poet seems meagre in comparison with its total wealth. But this is not the reason why it is the richest language for poetry: it is only a consequence of the real reason. This reason, in my opinion, is the variety of the elements of which English is made up. First, of course, there is the Germanic foundation, the element that you and we have in common. After this we find a considerable Scandinavian element, due in the first place to the Danish conquest.[4] Then there is the Norman French element, after the Norman conquest. After this there followed a succession of French influences, traceable through words adopted at different periods. The sixteenth century saw a great increase of new words coined from the Latin; and the development of the language from the early sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth, was largely a process of testing new Latin words, assimilating some and rejecting others. And there is another element in English, not so easy to trace, but I think of considerable importance, the Celtic. But I am not thinking, in all this history, only of the *Words*, I am thinking, for poetry, primarily of the *Rhythms*. Each of these languages brought its own music: and the richness of the English language for poetry is first of all in its variety of metrical elements. There is the rhythm of early Saxon verse, the rhythm of the Norman French, the rhythm of the Welsh, and also the influence of generations of study of Latin and Greek poetry. And even today, the English language enjoys constant possibilities of refreshment from its several centres: apart from the vocabulary, poems by Englishmen, Welshmen, Scots and Irishmen, all written in English, continue to show differences in their *Music*.

I have not taken the trouble to talk to you in order to praise my own language; my reason for discussing it is that I think the reason why English is such a good language for poetry is that it is a composite from so many different European sources. As I have said, this does not imply that England must have produced the greatest poets. Art, as Goethe said, is in limitation:[5] and a great poet is one who makes the most of the language that is given him. The truly great poet makes his language a great language. It is true, however, that we tend to think of each of the greater peoples as excelling in one art rather than another: Italy and then France in painting, Germany in music, and England in poetry. But, in the first place, no art has ever been the exclusive possession of any one country of Europe. And in the second place, there have been periods in which some other country than England has taken the lead in poetry. For instance, in the final years of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th, the Romantic movement in English poetry certainly dominated. But in the second half of the 19th century the greatest contribution to European poetry was certainly made in France. I refer to the tradition which starts with Baudelaire, and culminates in Paul Valéry. I venture to say that without this French tradition the work of three poets in other languages – and three very different from each other – I refer to W. B. Yeats, to Rainer Maria Rilke, and, if I may, to myself – would hardly be conceivable. And, so complicated are these literary influences, we must remember that this French movement itself owed a good deal to an American of Irish extraction: Edgar Allan Poe. And, even when one country and language leads all others, we must not assume that the poets to whom this is due are necessarily the greatest poets. I have spoken of the Romantic movement in England. But at the time Goethe was writing. I do not know of any standard by which one could gauge the relative greatness of Goethe and Wordsworth as *poets*, but the total work of Goethe has a scope which makes him a greater *man*. And no English poet contemporary with Wordsworth can enter into comparison with Goethe at all.

I have been leading up to another important truth about poetry in Europe. This is, that no one nation, no one language, would have achieved what it has, if the same art had not been cultivated in neighbouring countries and in different languages. We cannot understand any one European literature without knowing a good deal about the others. When we examine the history of poetry in Europe, we find a tissue of influences woven to and fro. There have been good poets who knew no language but their own, but even they have been subject to influences taken in and disseminated by other writers among their own people. Now, the possibility of each literature renewing itself, proceeding to new creative activity, making new discoveries in the use of words, depends on two things. First, its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. Second, its ability to go back and learn from its own sources. As for the first, when the several countries of Europe are cut off from each other, when poets no longer read any literature but that of their own language, poetry in every country must deteriorate. As for the second, I wish to make this point especially: that every literature must have some sources which are peculiarly its own, deep in its own history; but, also, and at least equally important, are the sources which we share in common: that is, the literature of Rome, of Greece and of Israel.

There is a question which ought to be asked at this point, and which ought to be answered. What of the influences from outside Europe, of the great literature of Asia?

In the literature of Asia is great poetry. There is also profound wisdom and some very difficult metaphysics; but at the moment I am only concerned with poetry. I have no knowledge whatever of the Arabic, Persian, or Chinese languages. Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages, and while I was chiefly interested at that time in Philosophy, I read a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility. But generally, poets are not oriental scholars – I was never a scholar myself – and the influence of oriental literature upon poets is usually through translations. That there has been some influence of poetry of the East in the last century and a half is undeniable: to instance only English poetry, and in our own time, the poetical translations from the Chinese, made by Ezra Pound and Arthur Waley, have probably been read by every poet writing in English.[6] It is obvious that through individual interpreters, specially gifted for appreciating a remote culture, every literature may influence every other; and I emphasise this. For when I speak of the unity of European culture, I do not want to give the impression that I regard European culture as something cut off from every other. The frontiers of culture are not, and should not be, closed. But history makes a difference. Those countries which share the most history, are the most important to each other, with respect to their future literature. We have our common classics, of Greece and Rome; we have a common classic even in our several translations of the Bible.

What I have said of poetry is I think true of the other arts as well. The painter or the composer perhaps enjoys greater freedom, in that he is not limited by a particular language spoken only in one part of Europe: but in the practice of every art I think you find the same three elements: the local tradition, the common European tradition, and the influence of the art of one European country upon another. I only put this as a suggestion. I must limit myself to the art which I know most about. In poetry at least, no one country can be consistently highly creative for an indefinite period. Each country must have its secondary epochs, when no remarkable new development takes place: and so the centre of activity will shift to and fro between one country and another. And in poetry there is no such thing as complete originality, owing nothing to the past. Whenever a Virgil, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Goethe is born, the whole future of European poetry is altered.[7] When a great poet has lived, certain things have been done once for all, and cannot be achieved again; but, on the other hand, every great poet adds something to the complex material out of which future poetry will be written.

I have been speaking of the unity of European culture as illustrated by the arts and among the arts by the only one of which I am qualified to speak. I want to talk next time about the unity of European culture as illustrated by *ideas*. I mentioned at the beginning that during the period between the wars I had edited a quarterly review. My experience in this capacity, and my reflections upon it, will provide the starting point for my next talk.

II

I mentioned in my last talk that I had founded and edited, between the wars, a literary review. I mentioned it first as one of my qualifications for speaking on this general subject. But also the history of this review illustrates some of the points that I want to make. So I hope that, after I have told you a little about it, you will begin to see its relevance to the subject of these talks.

We produced the first number of this review in the autumn of 1922, and decided to bring it to an end with the first number of the year 1939. So you see that its life covered nearly the same period that we call the years of peace. Except for a period of six months during which I tried the experiment of producing it monthly, its appearance was four times a year. In starting this review, I had the aim of bringing together the best in new thinking and new writing in its time, from all the countries of Europe that had anything to contribute to the common good. Of course it was designed primarily for English readers, and therefore all foreign contributions had to appear in an English translation. There may be a function for reviews published in two or more languages, and in two or more countries simultaneously. But even such reviews, if they search all Europe for contributions, must contain some pieces of translation, if they are to be read by everybody. And they cannot take the place of those periodicals which appear in each country and which are intended primarily for the readers in that country. So my review was an ordinary English periodical, only of international scope. I sought therefore, first to find out who were the best writers, unknown or little known outside of their own country, whose work deserved to be known more widely. Second, I tried to establish relations with those literary periodicals abroad, the aims of which corresponded most nearly to my own. I mention, as instances, the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (then edited by Jacques Rivière, and subsequently by Jean Paulhan), the *Neue Rundschau*, the *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*, the *Revista de Occidente* in Spain, *Il Convegno* and others in Italy.[8] These connections developed very satisfactorily, and it was no fault of any of the editors concerned, if they subsequently languished. I am still of the opinion, 23 years after I began, and seven years after I ended, that the existence of such a network of independent reviews, at least one in every capital of Europe, is necessary for the transmission of ideas – and to make possible the circulation of ideas while they are still fresh. The editors of such reviews, and if possible the more regular contributors, should be able to get to know each other personally, to visit each other, to entertain each other, and to exchange ideas in conversation. In any one such periodical, of course, there must be much that will be of interest only to readers of its own nation and language. But their cooperation should continually stimulate that circulation of influence of thought and sensibility, between nation and nation in Europe, which fertilises and renovates from abroad the literature of each one of them. And through such cooperation, and the friendships between men of letters which ensue from it, should emerge into public view those works of literature which are not only of local, but of European significance.

The particular point, however, of my talking about my aims, in relation to a review which has been dead for seven years, is that in the end they failed. And I attribute this failure chiefly to the gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe. A kind of cultural autarchy followed inevitably upon political and economic autarchy. This did not merely interrupt communications: I believe that it had a numbing effect upon creative activity within every country. The blight fell first upon our friends in Italy. And after 1933 contributions from Germany became more and more difficult to find. Some of our friends died; some disappeared; some merely became silent. Some went abroad, cut off from their own cultural roots. One of the latest found and the last lost, was that great critic and good European, who died a few months ago: Theodor Haecker.[9] And, from much of the German writing that I saw in the 30's, by authors previously unknown to me, I formed the opinion that the newer German writers had less and less to say to Europe; that they were more and more saying what could be understood, if understood at all, only in Germany. What happened in Spain is more confused; the tumult of the civil war was hardly favourable to thought and creative writing; and that war divided and scattered, even when it did not destroy, many of her ablest writers. In France there was still free intellectual activity, but more and more harassed and limited by political anxieties and forebodings, and by the internal divisions which political prepossessions set up. England, though manifesting some symptoms of the same malady, remained apparently intact. But I think that our literature of that period suffered by being more and more restricted to its own resources, as well as by the obsession with politics.

Now the first comment I have to make on this story of a literary review which had clearly failed of its purpose several years before events brought it to an end, is this. A universal concern with politics does not unite, it divides. It unites those politically minded folk who agree, across the frontiers of nations, against some other international group who hold opposed views. But it tends to destroy the cultural unity of Europe. *The Criterion*, for that is the name of the review which I edited, had, I believe, a definite character and cohesion, although its contributors were men holding the most diverse political, social and religious views. I think also that it had a definite congeniality with the foreign periodicals with which it associated itself. The question of a writer's political, social or religious views simply did not enter into our calculations, or into those of our foreign colleagues. What the common basis was, both at home and abroad, it is not easy to define. In those days it was unnecessary to formulate it; at the present time it becomes impossible to formulate. I should say that it was a common concern for the highest standards both of thought and of expression, that it was a common curiosity and openness of mind to new ideas. The ideas with which you did not agree, the opinions which you could not accept, were as important to you as those which you found immediately acceptable. You examined them without hostility, and with the assurance that you could learn from them. In other words, we could take for granted an interest, a delight, in ideas for their own sake, in the free play of intellect. And I think that also, among our chief contributors and colleagues, there was something which was not so much a consciously held belief, but an unconscious assumption. Something which had never been doubted, and therefore had no need to rise to the conscious level of affirmation. It was the assumption that there existed an international fraternity of men of letters, within Europe: a bond which did not replace, but was perfectly compatible with, national loyalties, religious loyalties, and differences of political philosophy. And that it was our business not so much to make any particular ideas prevail, as to maintain intellectual activity on the highest level.

I do not think that *The Criterion*, in its final years, wholly succeeded in living up to this ideal. I think that in the later years it tended to reflect a particular point of view, rather than to illustrate a variety of views on that plane. But I do not think that this was altogether the fault of the editor: I think that it came about largely from the pressure of circumstances of which I have spoken.

I am not pretending that politics and culture have nothing to do with each other. If they could be kept completely apart, the problem might be simpler than it is. A nation's political structure affects its culture, and in turn is affected by that culture. But nowadays we take too much interest in each other's domestic politics, and at the same time have very little contact with each other's culture. The confusion of culture and politics may lead in two different directions. It may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or to remould, every culture surrounding it. An error of the Germany of Hitler was to assume that every other culture than that of Germany was either decadent or barbaric. Let us have an end of such assumptions. The other direction in which the confusion of culture and politics may lead, is towards the ideal of a world state in which there will, in the end, be only one uniform world culture. I am not here criticising any schemes for world organisation. Such schemes belong to the plane of engineering, of devising machinery. Machinery is necessary, and the more perfect the machine the better. But culture is something that must grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time; and when it is grown you must not complain if you find that from an acorn has come an oak, and not an elm tree. And a political structure is partly construction, and partly growth; partly machinery, and the same machinery, if good, is equally good for all peoples; and partly growing with and from the nation's culture, and in that respect different from that of other nations.[10†] For the health of the culture of Europe two conditions are required: that the culture of each country should be unique, and that the different cultures should recognise their relationship to each other, so that each should be susceptible of influence from the others. And this is possible because there is a common element in European culture, an interrelated history of thought and feeling and behaviour, an interchange of arts and of ideas.

In my last talk I shall try to define this common element more closely: and I think that will require my saying a little more about the meaning that I give to this word "Culture," which I have been using so constantly.

III

I said at the end of my second talk that I should want to make a little clearer what I mean when I use the term "culture." Like "democracy," this is a term which needs to be, not only defined, but illustrated, almost every time we use it. And it is necessary to be clear about what we mean by "culture," so that we may be clear about the distinction between the material *organisation* of Europe, and the spiritual *organism* of Europe. If the latter dies, then what you organise will not be Europe, but merely a mass of human beings speaking several different languages. And there will be no longer any justification for their continuing to speak different languages, for they will no longer have anything to say which cannot be said equally well in any language: they will, in short, have no longer anything to say in poetry. I have already affirmed that there can be no "European" culture if the several countries are isolated from each other: I add now that there can be no European culture if these countries are reduced to identity. We need variety in unity: not the unity of organisation, but the unity of nature.

By "culture," then, I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean: the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion. But these things added together do not constitute the culture, though we often speak for convenience as if they did. These things are simply the parts into which a culture can be anatomised, as a human body can. But just as a man is something more than an assemblage of the various constituent parts of his body, so a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs, and religious beliefs. These things all act upon each other, and fully to understand one you have to understand all. Now there are of course higher cultures and lower cultures, and the higher cultures in general are distinguished by differentiation of function, so that you can speak of the less cultured and the more cultured *strata* of society, and finally, you can speak of *individuals* as being exceptionally cultured. The culture of an artist or a philosopher is distinct from that of a mine worker or field labourer; the culture of a poet will be somewhat different from that of a politician; but in a healthy society these are all parts of the same culture; and the artist, the poet, the philosopher, the politician and the labourer will have a culture in common, which they do not share with other people of the same occupations in other countries.

Now it is obvious that one unity of culture is that of the people who live together and speak the same language: because speaking the same language means thinking, and feeling, and having emotions, rather differently from people who use a different language. But the cultures of different peoples do affect each other: in the world of the future it looks as if every part of the world would affect every other part. I have suggested earlier, that the cultures of the different countries of Europe have in the past derived very great benefit from their influence upon each other. I have suggested that the national culture which isolates itself voluntarily, or the national culture which is cut off from others by circumstances which it cannot control, suffers from this isolation. Also, that the country which receives culture from abroad, without having anything to give in return, and the country which aims to impose its culture on another, without accepting anything in return, will both suffer from this lack of reciprocity.

There is something more than a general exchange of culture influences, however. You cannot even attempt to trade equally with every other nation: there will be some who need the kind of goods that you produce, more than others do, and there will be some who produce the goods you need yourselves, and others who do not. So cultures of people speaking different languages can be more or less closely related: and sometimes so closely related that we can speak of their having a common culture. Now when we speak of "European culture," we mean the identities which we can discover in the various national cultures; and of course even within Europe, some cultures are more closely related than others. Also, one culture within a group of cultures can be closely related, on different sides, to two cultures which are not closely related to each other. Your cousins are not all cousins of each other, for some are on the father's side and some on the mother's. Now, just as I have refused to consider the culture of Europe simply as the sum of a number of unrelated cultures in the same area, so I refused to separate the world into quite unrelated cultural groups; I refused to draw any absolute line between East and West, between Europe and Asia. There are, however, certain common features in Europe which make it possible to speak of a European culture. What are they?

The dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples, each of which has its distinct culture, is religion. Please do not, at this point, make a mistake in anticipating my meaning. This is not a religious talk, and I am not setting out to convert anybody. I am simply stating a fact. I am not so much concerned with the communion of Christian believers today; I am talking about the common *tradition* of Christianity which has made Europe what it is, and about the common cultural elements which this common Christianity has brought with it. If Asia were converted to Christianity tomorrow, it would not thereby become a part of Europe. It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have – until recently – been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. An individual European may not believe that the Christian Faith is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of Christian culture and depend upon that culture for its meaning. Only a Christian culture could have produced a Voltaire or a Nietzsche. I do not believe that the culture of Europe could survive the complete disappearance of the Christian Faith. And I am convinced of that, not merely as a Christian myself, but as a student of social biology. If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism. *We* should not live to see the new culture, nor would our great-great-great-grandchildren: and if we did, not one of us would be happy in it.

To our Christian heritage we owe many things, beside religious faith. Through it we trace the evolution of our arts, through it we have our conception of Roman Law which has done so much to shape the Western World, through it we have our conceptions of private and public morality. And through it we have our common standards of literature, in the literatures of Greece and Rome. The Western world has its unity in this heritage, in Christianity and in the ancient civilisations of Greece, Rome and Israel, from which, owing to two thousand years of Christianity, we trace our descent. I shall not elaborate this point. What I wish to say is, that this unity in the common elements of culture, throughout many centuries, is the true bond between us. No political and economic organisation, however much goodwill it commands, can supply what this culture unity gives. If we dissipate or throw away our common patrimony of culture, then all the organisation and planning of the most ingenious minds will not help us, or bring us closer together.

The unity of culture, in contrast to the unity of political organisation, does not require all to have only *one* loyalty: it means that there will be a variety of loyalties. It is wrong that the only duty of the individual should be held to be towards the State; it is fantastic to hold that the supreme duty of every individual should be towards a Super-State. I will give one instance of what I mean by a variety of loyalties. No university ought to be merely a national institution, even if it is supported by the nation. The universities of Europe should have their common ideals, they should have their obligations towards each other. They should be independent of the governments of the countries in which they are situated. They should not be institutions for the training of an efficient bureaucracy, or for equipping scientists to get the better of foreign scientists; they should stand for the preservation of learning, for the pursuit of truth, and in so far as men are capable of it, attainment of wisdom.

There is much more that I should have liked to say in this last talk, but I must now be very brief. My last appeal is to the men of letters of Europe, who have a special responsibility for the preservation and transmission of our common culture. We may hold very different political views: our common responsibility is to preserve our common culture uncontaminated by political influences. It is not a question of sentiment: it does not matter so much that we should like each other, or praise each other's writings. What matters is that we should recognise our relationship and mutual dependence upon each other. What matters is our inability, without each other, to produce those excellent works which mark a superior civilisation. We cannot, at present, hold much communication with each other. We cannot visit each other as private individuals; if we travel at all, it can only be through government agencies and with official duties. But we can at least try to save something of those goods of which we are the common trustees: the legacy of Greece, Rome and Israel, and the legacy of Europe throughout the last 2,000 years. In a world which has seen such material devastation as ours, these spiritual possessions are also in imminent peril.

PUBLISHED TRANSLATION

I

Ich spreche heute zum allerersten Mal zu einem deutschen Publikum. Bevor ich daher auf ein so großes Thema eingehe, muss ich wohl erklären, warum ich mich dazu berufen fühle. Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur ist in der Tat ein so umfassendes Thema, dass niemand es behandeln sollte, den nicht besondere Kenntnisse, ganz bestimmte Erfahrungen dazu befähigen. Von diesen Kenntnissen und Erfahrungen muss man ausgehen und zeigen, inwieweit sie für die Behandlung des Gesamtgegenstandes von Bedeutung sind. Ich bin Dichter und Kritiker. Von neunzehnhundertzweiundzwanzig bis neunzehnhundertneununddreißig war ich außerdem Herausgeber einer Vierteljahreszeitschrift.[3] Ich will nun in diesem ersten Vortrag den Beruf des Dichters und Kritikers in Zusammenhang bringen mit meinem Thema: der Einheit der europäischen Kultur. Ich will die Ansichten entwickeln, zu denen ich auf Grund meiner persönlichen Erfahrungen gelangt bin.

Es ist oft behauptet worden, dass von allen modernen Sprachen Europas das Englische dem Dichter die größte Ausdrucksmöglichkeit gibt. Diese Behauptung trifft meiner Ansicht nach zu. Aber, bitte, verstehen Sie mich recht. Ich habe mit Absicht gesagt: die größte dichterische Ausdrucksmöglichkeit. Damit habe ich nicht sagen wollen, England hat die größten Dichter hervorgebracht oder das größte Maß großer Dichtung. Das ist etwas vollkommen Anderes: Große Dichter gibt es genauso in anderen Sprachen. Dante ist zweifellos ein größerer Dichter als Milton und mindestens so groß wie Shakespeare. Es geht mir auch nicht um das quantitative Element. Ich habe einzig und allein ausdrücken wollen, dass die englische Sprache das beste Instrument sei, auf das ein Dichter seinen Bogen spannen kann. Sie hat schon allein den größten Wortschatz: so groß, dass der Teil, den jeder einzelne Dichter daraus beherrscht, im Vergleich zum Ganzen recht gering erscheint. Aber dieser große Wortschatz ist nicht die wahre Ursache für den Reichtum der englischen Sprache. Er ist nur eine Folge dieser Ursache. Die wirkliche Ursache des Reichtums der englischen Sprache ist die Vielfalt der Elemente, aus denen sie sich zusammensetzt. Da ist zuerst natürlich die germanische Grundlage, die Ihnen und uns gemeinsam ist. Dann ein recht starkes skandinavisches Element, das aus der Zeit des dänischen Einfalls in England stammt.[4] Dann das normannisch-französische Element, aus der Zeit der normannischen Eroberung, sowie andere französische Einflüsse aus späteren Perioden. Im sechzehnten Jahrhundert kam es dann zu einer großen Zahl neuer Wortbildungen direkt aus dem Lateinischen. Ja, die ganze Entwicklung der englischen Sprache vom frühen sechzehnten Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des siebzehnten bestand zum großen Teil aus Experimenten mit neuen lateinischen Worten, von denen einige assimiliert, andere wieder verworfen wurden. Und schließlich enthält die englische Sprache noch ein letztes Element, dem ich persönlich große Bedeutung zumesse, wenn es auch schwer nachweisbar ist: nämlich das Keltische. Aber ich denke bei diesem geschichtlichen Abriss nicht allein an Worte, sondern, da es mir um die Dichtung geht, in erster Linie an Rhythmen. Jede der verschiedenen Sprachen, die zusammen das heutige Englisch gebildet haben, brachte ihre eigene Musik mit. Der Reichtum der englischen Sprache als dichterisches Instrument liegt in ihrer metrischen Vielfalt: Rhythmus und Melodie des frühen Angelsächsisch, des Normannisch-Französischen und des Walisischen, sowie die Spuren, die das jahrhundertelange Studium des Lateinischen und Griechischen in unserer Sprache hinterlassen hat. Die verschiedenen Randsprachen des Englischen tragen übrigens auch heute noch ständig zu seiner Bereicherung bei. Gedichte, die von Walisern, Schotten und Iren auf Englisch verfasst werden, weisen nicht allein Unterschiede in ihrem Vokabular auf, sondern auch Modulationen in ihrer Musik.

Doch all das sage ich nicht, um meine Muttersprache anzupreisen. Es kommt mir vielmehr darauf an, hervorzuheben, dass das Englische sich gerade deshalb so sehr zur Dichtung eignet, weil in ihm so viele europäische Sprachen zusammenfließen. Wie gesagt, bedeutet das nicht, dass England die größten Dichter hervorgebracht hat. Ein Dichter ist dann wahrhaft groß, wenn er seine eigene Sprache voll auswertet, wenn er sie zu einer großen Sprache macht. Allerdings neigen wir dazu, jedes der großen europäischen Völker mit einer ganz bestimmten Kunstform zu assoziieren: Italien, und später Frankreich, mit Malerei, Deutschland mit Musik, England mit Dichtung. Aber dagegen lässt sich einmal einwenden, dass keine Kunstform je ausschließlicher Besitz eines einzigen Landes gewesen ist. Ferner hat es, zum Beispiel auf dem Gebiet der Dichtung, Perioden gegeben, in denen nicht England, sondern ein anderes Land führend war. Am Ausgang des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts und im ersten Viertel des neunzehnten nahm die englische Romantik in der europäischen Dichtung den ersten Platz ein. Aber in der zweiten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts kam der größte Beitrag zweifellos von Frankreich. Ich denke dabei an die Bewegung in der französischen Lyrik, deren Grundlage von Baudelaire gelegt wurde und die mit Paul Valéry geendet hat. Ohne diese Bewegung wäre das Werk dreier nichtfranzösischer Dichter – alle drei voneinander sehr verschieden – überhaupt nicht denkbar. Das sind Rainer Maria Rilke, der vor wenigen Jahren verstorbene irische Dichter Yeats und – wenn ich so persönlich sprechen darf – ich selbst. Auf sie und mich hat die französische Lyrik dieser Periode einen entscheidenden Einfluss ausgeübt. Wie kompliziert aber literarische Einflüsse sein können, zeigt die Tatsache, dass diese französische Bewegung ihrerseits einem amerikanischen Dichter irischer Abstammung sehr viel verdankt: dem Dichter Edgar Allan Poe. Und sogar dann, wenn ein Land in der Dichtung wirklich führend ist, verfügt es damit nicht unbedingt über die größten Dichter. Ich erwähnte die englische Romantik. Nun, ein Zeitgenosse ihrer Hauptvertreter, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats und Byron, war Goethe. Ich weiß nicht, nach welchem Maßstab man die relative Größe von Goethe und Wordsworth als Dichter gegeneinander abmessen könnte. Aber dass Goethe *der größere Mensch* gewesen sein muss, beweist der ungleich umfassendere Charakter seines

Gesamtwerkes. Und Wordsworth ist von den Dichtern seiner Zeit der einzige, der sich überhaupt mit Goethe vergleichen lässt.

Ich komme damit zu einer weiteren Feststellung über die europäische Dichtung. Kein Volk hätte in der Dichtung leisten können, was es geleistet hat, ohne die gleichzeitigen Bemühungen seiner Nachbarvölker und Nachbarsprachen auf demselben Gebiet. Wir können die Literatur eines europäischen Landes nicht verstehen, ohne dass wir eine ziemlich gute Kenntnis der europäischen Gesamtliteratur besitzen. Die Fäden der Dichtung spinnen sich von einem Land in das andere, verknüpfen ein Zeitalter mit dem anderen. Gewiss, es hat gute Dichter gegeben, die nur eine Sprache kannten, ihre eigene. Aber selbst sie waren zweifellos Einflüssen unterworfen, die andere Dichter vor ihnen aus fremden Sprachen empfangen und ihrer eigenen einverleibt hatten. Zweierlei ist notwendig, damit die Literatur eines Landes sich erneuern kann, damit sie neues Leben gewinnt und lernt, mit alten Worten auf neue Weise umzugehen: erstens die Fähigkeit, fremde Einflüsse aufzunehmen und zu assimilieren, dann die Fähigkeit, zu ihren eigenen Quellen zurückzufinden und aus ihnen neu zu lernen. Die erste Forderung scheint mir völlig unbestreitbar; wenn die Länder Europas geistig voneinander abgeschnitten sind, wenn Dichter nur die Literatur ihres eigenen Landes lesen, dann muss die Dichtung verkümmern. Zu dem zweiten Punkt möchte ich Folgendes sagen: In jeder Literatur müssen natürlich Elemente enthalten sein, die tief in ihrer eigenen Geschichte wurzeln und daher mit ihr besonders eng verwachsen sind. Aber mindestens ebenso wichtig sind die Quellen, aus denen wir alle gemeinsam geschöpft haben: die Literatur Roms, Griechenlands und Israels.

An dieser Stelle muss wohl die Frage aufgeworfen und beantwortet werden: Welche Rolle spielen *außer*europäische Einflüsse, wie zum Beispiel die große asiatische Literatur?

In der Literatur Asiens gibt es große Dichtung; von ihren anderen Erzeugnissen, Werken philosophischer Weisheit oder metaphysischen Inhalts will ich hier nicht sprechen, da es mir im Augenblick um Dichtung allein zu tun ist. Ich persönlich kann weder Arabisch, noch Persisch, noch Chinesisch. Vor langen Jahren habe ich mich einmal mit indischen Sprachen beschäftigt. Damals galt mein Interesse zwar in erster Linie indischer Philosophie, aber ich las auch gelegentlich Gedichte. Ich bin mir bewusst, dass meine eigenen Gedichte zum Beispiel gewisse Einflüsse indischen Denkens und Fühlens aufweisen. Im Allgemeinen sind Dichter jedoch weder Professoren für orientalische Sprachen noch Gelehrte – ich selbst bin keins von beiden –; eine Beeinflussung abendländischer Dichtung durch die Literatur des Orients erfolgt daher gewöhnlich mittels Übersetzungen. Dass ein derartiger Einfluss in den letzten 150 Jahren vorhanden war, ist gar keine Frage. Als Beispiel brauche ich nur die englische Lyrik der Gegenwart anzuführen: Ezra Pounds und Arthur Waleys Übertragungen aus dem Chinesischen kennt wahrscheinlich heute jeder dem englischen Kulturkreis angehörige Dichter.[6] Da es überall Menschen gibt, die sich auf die Literatur eines Landes spezialisieren, das ihrem eigenen Kulturkreis an sich äußerst fern liegt, besteht die Möglichkeit eines dauernden Kontaktes zwischen allen Literaturen der Welt. Ich möchte dies ganz besonders unterstreichen. Nichts liegt mir ferner als zu behaupten, die europäische Kultur sei sich selbst genug. Im Bereich der Kultur gibt es und darf es keine geschlossenen Grenzen geben. Aber man kann über die Geschichte nicht hinweggehen. Die Länder, die historisch am längsten und engsten miteinander verbunden sind, haben einander auch auf literarischem Gebiet am meisten zu sagen. Die griechischen und römischen Klassiker, die Bibel und ihren verschiedenen Übersetzungen sind unser aller gemeinsames Erbgut.

Was ich über Dichtung gesagt habe, trifft wohl auch für die anderen Kunstformen zu. Maler und Musiker genießen vielleicht noch größere Freiheit, da sie nicht an eine bestimmte Sprache gebunden sind. Aber im Grunde glaube ich, dass jede Kunstform in Europa auf den gleichen drei Elementen beruht: auf der heimischen Überlieferung, der gemeinsamen europäischen Überlieferung und dem Einfluss, den ein Land Europas auf das andere ausübt. Da meine eigenen Erfahrungen sich hauptsächlich auf das Gebiet der Dichtung beschränken, mache ich keinen Anspruch auf die Allgemeingültigkeit dieser Ansicht. Doch das eine weiß ich: In der Dichtung kann kein Land auf unbegrenzte Zeit Großes leisten. Immer wieder muss auf eine Blütezeit eine Zeit der Ruhe folgen – eine Periode ohne bedeutende Neuentwicklungen. Ein Land löst als Zentrum literarischen Schaffens das andere ab. Es gibt in der Dichtung keine absolute Originalität, keine völlige Loslösung von der Vergangenheit. Die Geburt eines Virgil, eines Dante, eines Shakespeare, die Geburt eines Goethe verleiht mit einem Schlage der gesamten europäischen Dichtung ein neues Gesicht.[7] Wenn ein solcher Dichter gelebt hat, dann sind gewisse Probleme ein für alle Mal gelöst und damit dem Schaffensfeld späterer Dichter auf ewig entzogen. Jeder große Dichter trägt aber auch sein Teil zu dem Gesamtreichtum bei, der das Material für die Dichtung der Zukunft bildet.

Ich habe von der Einheit der europäischen Kultur *in der Kunst* gesprochen – ich habe mich dabei auf das Beispiel der Kunstform beschränkt, die mir am nächsten liegt. In meinem zweiten Vortrag möchte ich die Einheit der europäischen Kultur *in der Idee* zu meinem Thema machen. Ich erwähnte zu Beginn, dass ich in den Jahren zwischen den Kriegen eine Vierteljahreszeitschrift herausgab. Meine Erfahrungen bei dieser Tätigkeit und die Betrachtungen, die ich daran geknüpft habe, werden den Ausgangspunkt meines nächsten Vortrags bilden.

II

Ich erwähnte vor acht Tagen, dass ich in der Zeit zwischen den beiden Kriegen eine literarische Zeitschrift begründete und herausgab. Ich erwähnte diesen Punkt zunächst einmal, weil er mir – neben anderen – das Recht dazu gibt, über das allgemeine Thema „Europäische Kultur" zu sprechen. Aber auch der Werdegang der Zeitschrift selbst veranschaulicht manches von dem, was ich sagen möchte. Ich hoffe also, wenn ich ein wenig über die Zeitschrift gesprochen habe, wird Ihnen der Zusammenhang mit meinem eigentlichen Thema klarwerden.

Die Zeitschrift hieß *Criterion*. Ihre erste Nummer brachten wir im Herbst 1922 heraus, die letzte Anfang 1939. Ihre Existenz umspannte also etwa den Zeitraum, den wir als die Jahre des Friedens bezeichnen. *Criterion* erschien viermal jährlich – nur ein halbes Jahr versuchte ich, sie monatlich herauszubringen. Als ich *Criterion* gründete, wollte ich damit ein Forum schaffen für das Beste an neuem Denken und Schrifttum, das die damalige Zeit in allen europäischen Ländern hervorbrachte. Natürlich war *Criterion* in erster Linie für englische Leser gedacht. Alle ausländischen Beiträge mussten also in englischer Übersetzung erscheinen. Gewiss, auch zwei- oder mehrsprachige Zeitschriften, die in mehreren Ländern gleichzeitig erscheinen, haben ihre Berechtigung. Aber auch sie kommen nicht ganz ohne Übersetzungen aus, wenn sie Beiträge aus ganz Europa einbeziehen und zugleich für jedermann verständlich sein sollen. Sie können auch nie ganz die üblichen Zeitschriften ersetzen, die nur in *einem* Lande erscheinen und in erster Linie an die Leser *eines* Landes gerichtet sind. *Criterion* sollte also eine normale englische Zeitschrift sein, jedoch mit internationalem Gesichtskreis. Ich bemühte mich daher zunächst, herauszufinden, wen es in Europa an bedeutenden Schriftstellern gab, die bisher außerhalb ihres Landes mehr oder weniger unbekannt waren und die einen größeren Leserkreis verdienten. Außerdem nahm ich Fühlung mit ähnlich gesinnten

Zeitschriften des Auslands. So mit der *Nouvelle Revue Française*, die damals von Jacques Rivière und später von Jean Paulhan herausgegeben wurde, ferner mit der *Neuen Rundschau*, der *Neuen Schweizer Rundschau*, der *Revista del Occidente* in Spanien und mit italienischen Publikationen wie der Zeitschrift *Il Convegno*. Diese Beziehungen ließen sich zunächst sehr gut an, und es war nicht die Schuld der einzelnen Herausgeber, dass sie später einschliefen. Ich bin auch heute noch der Ansicht – 23 Jahre nach dem Beginn meines Unternehmens und 7 Jahre nach seinem Ende –, dass ein solches Netz von unabhängigen Zeitschriften notwendig ist, damit Ideen, und besonders junge, neue Ideen, rasch und frei zirkulieren können. Mindestens eine Zeitschrift dieser Art sollte es in jeder Hauptstadt geben. Ihre Herausgeber und regelmäßigeren Mitarbeiter sollten einander kennenlernen, einander öfters besuchen, um ihre Ideen in persönlicher Unterhaltung auszutauschen. Jede Zeitschrift wird selbstverständlich vieles enthalten, was nur ihre heimische Leserschaft interessiert. Aber die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den verschiedenen Zeitschriften würde eine dauernde Anregung bilden für den Austausch von Gedanken- und Gefühlswerten zwischen den Ländern Europas, so dass die Literatur jedes einzelnen von ihnen ständige Bereicherung und Erneuerung erführe. Durch diese Zusammenarbeit und die Freundschaft zwischen den Vertretern des Schrifttums in Europa würden der Öffentlichkeit literarische Werke zugänglich gemacht werden, die nicht allein von lokaler, sondern von europäischer Bedeutung sind.

Was mich dazu bringt, über meine Ziele bei der Gründung einer Zeitschrift zu sprechen, die schon seit sieben Jahren nicht mehr existiert, ist gerade die Tatsache, dass diese Ziele am Ende doch nicht erreicht wurden. Schuld an diesem Fehlschlag war meiner Ansicht nach hauptsächlich die allmähliche Abriegelung der geistigen Grenzen innerhalb Europas. Politische und wirtschaftliche Autarkie führte unweigerlich zu einer Art geistiger Autarkie. Diese geistige Autarkie bewirkte ihrerseits nicht nur ein Abreißen der geistigen Verbindungslinien, sondern lähmte auch das geistige Schaffen innerhalb jedes einzelnen Landes. Der Mehltau fiel zuerst auf unsere Freunde in Italien. Und nach 1933 wurden Beiträge aus Deutschland immer seltener. Einige unserer Freunde starben, andere verschwanden, andere wieder verstummten einfach. Einer, der sich erst spät zu uns gefunden hatte, und dessen Verlust wir heute betrauern, war der große Kritiker und Europäer Theodor Haecker, der vor wenigen Monaten in Deutschland gestorben ist.[8] Was ich in den dreißiger Jahren an deutschem Schrifttum sah, von Verfassern, die mir bis dahin unbekannt geblieben waren, erweckte in mir den Eindruck, dass die neueren deutschen Schriftsteller dem übrigen Europa immer weniger zu sagen hatten – dass sie mehr und mehr eine Sprache redeten, die, wenn überhaupt, nur für Deutschland verständlich war. In Spanien war das Bild weniger klar. Der Aufruhr des Bürgerkrieges bildete wohl kaum eine günstige Atmosphäre für geistiges Schaffen. Die besten spanischen Schriftsteller wurden, soweit sie den Krieg überlebten, aus dem Geleise geworfen oder durch politischen Zwiespalt einander entfremdet. In Frankreich war dem geistigen Schaffen äußerlich kein Hindernis gesetzt, aber innerlich wurde es untergraben durch politische Unsicherheit, düstere Vorahnungen und die Spaltungen, die politische Voreingenommenheit hervorgerufen hatte. England wies einige Symptome der gleichen Krankheit auf, blieb aber mehr oder weniger unerschüttert. Meiner Überzeugung nach litt unsere Literatur in jenen Jahren unter ihrer geistigen Isolierung und unter allzu großer Beeinflussung durch Politik.

Wie diese kurze Schilderung zeigt, hatte meine Zeitschrift offensichtlich bereits mehrere Jahre vor ihrem Ende ihren eigentlichen Zweck verfehlt. Dies bringt mich zu folgender Feststellung: Ein Übergewicht der Politik im menschlichen Denken führt nicht zur Einigkeit, sondern zum Zwiespalt. Es eint wohl über die Landesgrenzen hinweg alle Gleichgesinnten im Kampf gegen eine ähnliche Gruppe Andersdenkender, aber es untergräbt die kulturelle Einheit Europas.

Die Zeitschrift *Criterion* besaß, glaube ich, ihren eigenen festgefügten Charakter, wenn auch ihre Mitarbeiter die verschiedensten politischen, sozialen und religiösen Ansichten vertraten. Sie wies auch eine deutlich erkennbare Verwandtschaft den Zeitschriften des Auslands auf, mit denen sie in Fühlung stand. Die Frage der politischen, sozialen oder religiösen Anschauungen eines Mitarbeiters spielte für uns und unsere ausländischen Kollegen nicht die geringste Rolle. Es erhebt sich also die Frage: Was war die gemeinsame Basis dieses Netzes von Zeitschriften? Eine genaue Antwort zu geben ist sehr schwer. Damals war eine Formulierung nicht notwendig. Heute, im Rückblick, ist sie fast unmöglich. Vielleicht lässt es sich so ausdrücken: Was wir alle anstrebten war das Höchste, das die Gegenwart an Ideen und Ausdrucksformen liefern konnte. Was wir alle besaßen, war echtes Interesse und Empfänglichkeit für neue Ideen. Ideen, mit denen man nicht übereinstimmte, Meinungen, die man nicht unterschreiben konnte, waren für uns genau so wertvoll wie die, die wir ohne

Vorbehalt für richtig hielten. Man ging an solche Ideen ohne Feindseligkeit heran und mit der Gewissheit, dass man daraus etwas lernen konnte. Mit anderen Worten: Interesse an neuen Ideen um ihrer selbst willen, Freude an dem freien Spiel des Geistes war etwas, was sich für uns alle von selbst verstand. Außerdem lebte in unseren Mitarbeitern und Kollegen, nicht so sehr als bewusste Überzeugung, sondern als eine selbstverständliche Voraussetzung, die keiner Erwähnung bedurfte, der Glaube an eine natürliche Verbundenheit zwischen den Männern des Geistes in Europa: eine Solidarität, die der Verbundenheit jedes Einzelnen von ihnen mit seinem eigenen Lande, seinen religiösen Bindungen oder politischen Anschauungen durchaus nicht im Wege stand, sondern mit ihnen vollkommen vereinbar war. Der Glaube ferner, dass wir weniger die Aufgabe hatten, bestimmten Ideen zum Siege zu verhelfen, als dafür zu sorgen, dass das europäische Geistesleben sein hohes Niveau behielt.

Ich bin nicht der Ansicht, dass *Criterion* in den letzten Jahren seines Bestehens diesem Ideal vollkommen entsprach. Statt eine Vielfalt von Ideen widerzuspiegeln, neigte sie mit den Jahren immer mehr einem ganz bestimmten Standpunkt zu. Ich glaube nicht, dass ihr Herausgeber daran die größte Schuld trug. Im Wesentlichen lag es wohl an dem Druck der Verhältnisse, von dem ich vorhin gesprochen habe.

Ich will nicht behaupten, dass Politik und Kultur nichts miteinander zu tun haben. Ja – wäre es möglich, sie vollkommen zu trennen, dann würde das ganze Problem sogar sehr vereinfacht sein. Der politische Aufbau eines Landes übt aber auf seine Kultur einen Einfluss aus und wird seinerseits von ihr beeinflusst. Heute machen wir jedoch den Fehler, dass wir uns zu sehr um unsere gegenseitigen politischen Probleme kümmern, ohne entsprechenden Kontakt auf dem Gebiet der Kultur. Diese Vermengung von Kultur und Politik kann einmal dazu führen, dass ein Land keine Kultur mehr anerkennt außer der eigenen, dass es sich bemüßigt fühlt, seine Nachbarkulturen auszumerzen oder gewaltsam umzuformen. In Deutschland bezeichnete man unter Hitler jede nichtdeutsche Kultur entweder als dekadent oder als barbarisch. Es wäre Zeit, dass solche Vorurteile aufhörten. Andrerseits kann die Vermischung von Kultur und Politik genau die entgegengesetzten Folgen haben: Sie kann zu dem vermeintlichen Ideal eines Weltstaates führen, in dem es schließlich nur eine einzige einförmige Weltkultur gibt. Ich kritisiere keineswegs praktische Pläne zu einer Weltorganisation. Solche Pläne fallen in den Bereich technischer, organisatorischer Fragen, Fragen der Maschinerie. Maschinerie ist notwendig und wertvoll. Je besser sie ist, desto besser wird die Organisation funktionieren. Aber Kultur ist nicht organisatorisch, sondern organisch. Kultur wächst: einen Baum kann man nicht bauen; man kann ihn nur pflanzen, pflegen und warten, dass er reift; wenn eines Tages der Baum vor uns steht, kann man sich nicht beklagen, dass aus der Eichel eine Eiche geworden ist und keine Ulme. Die politische Struktur eines Landes ist zum Teil bewusste Konstruktion, zum Teil natürliches Wachstum. Die zur Konstruktion benötigte Maschinerie kann, wenn sie gut ist, gut sein für alle Völker. Aber der Teil der politischen Struktur, der organisches Wachstum ist, entspringt aus der Kultur eines Volkes und wächst mit ihr mit. In diesem organischen Element unterscheidet sich der Aufbau eines Volkes von dem aller anderen Völker. Für eine gesunde europäische Kultur ist zweierlei notwendig: Erstens, dass jedes Land seine bodenständige Kultur besitzt, zweitens, dass die verschiedenen Kulturen ihre Beziehungen zueinander anerkennen und bejahen, damit jede für die Einflüsse der anderen empfänglich bleibt. Dies wird ermöglicht und erleichtert dadurch, dass es in der europäischen Kultur ein gemeinsames Grundelement gibt, ein langes gegenseitiges Befruchten im Denken, Fühlen und Sagen, eine Wechselbeziehung in der Kunst und in der Idee.

In meinem nächsten und letzten Vortrag möchte ich dieses gemeinsame Grundelement etwas deutlicher definieren. Zu diesem Zweck werde ich auch wohl besser erklären müssen, was ich unter dem Wort Kultur verstehe, das ich in meinen beiden ersten Vorträgen so häufig gebraucht habe.

III

Ich versprach das vorige Mal, näher zu erklären, was ich unter Kultur verstehe. Kultur – genauso wie Demokratie – ist ein Begriff, den man fast jedes Mal von Neuem definieren muss, und nicht allein definieren, sondern auch veranschaulichen. Wir müssen uns über die Bedeutung dieses Begriffes Kultur genau im Klaren sein, damit wir einen Trennungsstrich ziehen können zwischen der materiellen Organisation und dem geistigen Organismus Europas. Wenn Europa als geistiger Organismus abstirbt, dann wird das, was uns zu organisieren übrigbleibt, nicht mehr Europa sein, sondern nur eine Masse menschlicher Existenzen, die verschiedenen Sprachen reden. Ja, die verschiedenen Sprachen selbst werden ihre Existenzberechtigung verlieren, da diese Menschen nichts mehr zu sagen haben würden, was sich nicht genau so gut in jeder beliebigen Sprache sagen ließe; da sie nichts mehr zu sagen hätten in der Sprache der Dichtung. Ich habe bereits die

Ansicht geäußert, dass es keine „europäische“ Kultur geben kann, wenn sich die Länder Europas voneinander isolieren. Ich möchte jetzt hinzufügen: Ebenso wenig kann es eine europäische Kultur geben, wenn ihre nationalen Eigenarten zur Gleichförmigkeit verschmelzen. Was wir brauchen, ist Mannigfaltigkeit, der eine Einheit zugrunde liegt, aber keine organisatorische, sondern eine natürliche Einheit.

Unter „Kultur“ verstehe ich also zunächst einmal das, was auch die Anthropologen darunter verstehen: die besondere Lebensweise eines Volkes, die sich durch sein Zusammenleben auf gleichem Boden herausgebildet hat. Diese Kultur äußert sich in der Kunst eines Volkes, in seinem sozialen System, seinen Sitten und Gebräuchen, seiner Religion. Aber all dies zusammen ist noch nicht die Kultur des betreffenden Volkes, obgleich wir es der Einfachheit halber oft so ausdrücken. All diese Dinge sind nur die Bestandteile, in die eine Kultur zerlegt werden kann – gerade so wie sich der menschliche Körper anatomisch zerlegen lässt. Genau so wie der Mensch mehr ist als die Summe seiner Organe und Glieder, so ist auch die Kultur mehr als die Summe von Künsten, Gebräuchen und religiösen Überzeugungen. Alle diese Elemente wirken aufeinander ein, und wenn man eines völlig verstehen will, muss man alle verstehen. Es gibt natürlich höhere und niedrigere Kulturen; die höheren zeichnen sich gewöhnlich durch eine stärkere Differenzierung ihrer Funktionen aus, so dass man von den mehr und den weniger kultivierten Gesellschaftsschichten sprechen kann. Und schließlich kann man auch noch Einzelmenschen als besonders kultiviert bezeichnen. Ein Künstler, ein Philosoph werden eine andere Art der Kultur besitzen als ein Land- oder Bergarbeiter; die Kultur eines Dichters wird nicht ganz dieselbe sein wie die eines Politikers. Aber in einer gesunden Gesellschaft sind dies alles nur Schattierungen einer und derselben Kultur: Künstler, Dichter, Philosophen, Politiker und Arbeiter eines Landes werden miteinander eine Kultur gemeinsam haben, die sie nicht mit ihren Berufskollegen in anderen Ländern teilen.

Wie ich bereits sagte, ist es klar, dass diese kulturelle Einheit eines Volkes zum Teil in seinem Zusammenleben und Eine-Sprache-Sprechen liegt; denn die selbe Sprache sprechen heißt in Denken und Fühlen ein wenig anders sein als Menschen einer anderen Sprache. Und doch muss immer wieder gesagt werden, dass die Kulturen verschiedener Völker einander nicht unberührt lassen. Ja, die Zeit ist wohl nicht mehr fern, da alle Teile der Welt dauernd aufeinander einwirken werden. Ich habe schon in meinen ersten beiden Vorträgen davon gesprochen, wie fruchtbringend der Einfluss war, den die Länder Europas in der Vergangenheit aufeinander ausgeübt haben. Ich sprach davon, dass Länder, die sich geistig isolieren, sei es freiwillig oder durch äußeren Druck, innerlich Schaden erleiden. Länder, die Kultur nur von außen aufsaugen, ohne etwas von sich selbst zu spenden, werden diese Einseitigkeit zu büßen haben, genauso wie Länder, die ihre Kultur anderen aufzwingen wollen, ohne selbst aufnahmebereit zu sein.

Einen allseitigen, gleichmäßigen Austausch kultureller Werte gibt es allerdings nicht. Auch auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet kann man nicht mit allen Ländern gleichmäßig Handel treiben: Manche benötigen die Güter, die man selbst herstellt, mehr als andere; einige erzeugen die Waren, die man einführen will, andere nicht. Genau so ist es auf dem Gebiet der Kultur; es gibt Länder mit engen und solche mit weniger engen kulturellen Bindungen. Manchmal ist das Band so stark, dass man von Kulturgemeinschaft sprechen kann. Wenn wir also den Ausdruck „europäische Kultur“ gebrauchen, meinen wir die Elemente, die innerhalb der verschiedenen nationalen Kulturen die gleichen sind. Natürlich stehen manche Länder Europas einander näher als andere. Es kann sogar vorkommen, dass ein Land eine starke kulturelle Verwandtschaft mit zwei verschiedenen Ländern aufweist, die ihrerseits nur sehr lose Bindungen besitzen. Es gibt ja auch in der Familie Vettern mütterlicherseits und Vettern väterlicherseits, zwischen denen keine direkte Verwandtschaft besteht. Genau so wie ich es also ablehne, die europäische Kultur als Summe einer Anzahl von Einzelkulturen anzusehen, wende ich mich auch gegen die Einteilung der Welt in scharf getrennte Kulturgruppen. Es gibt meiner Ansicht nach keine absolute Scheidelinie zwischen Ost und West, zwischen Europa und Asien. Aber es gibt innerhalb Europas gewisse gemeinsame Züge, die uns das Recht geben, von einer europäischen Kultur zu sprechen. Welches sind diese Züge?

Die treibende Kraft bei der Schaffung einer gemeinsamen Kultur in zwei kulturell verschiedenen Ländern ist die Religion. Nun soll mich niemand falsch verstehen und denken, er wüsste bereits, worauf ich hinauswill: Dies ist kein religiöser Vortrag, und ich will niemanden bekehren. Ich spreche nur eine Tatsache aus. Ich denke nicht so sehr an das Band zwischen den gläubigen Christen unserer Zeit. Ich denke an die uns allen gemeinsame *Tradition* des Christentums, die das moderne Europa geprägt hat, und an die kulturellen Werte, die für uns alle aus dieser Tradition erwachsen sind. Wenn ganz Asien morgen zum christlichen Glauben bekehrt würde, so würde es damit noch kein Teil Europas. Es ist das Christentum, auf dessen Grundlage sich unsere Kunst entwickelt hat, es ist das Christentum, in dem

– bis vor Kurzem wenigstens – die Gesetze Europas verwurzelt waren. Allein vor diesem Hintergrund des Christentums erhält unser ganzes Denken seinen Sinn. Der einzelne Europäer mag den christlichen Glauben für falsch halten, und doch entspringt alles, was er sagt, denkt oder tut, diesem Erbgut der christlichen Kultur und wird nur aus ihm heraus verständlich. Allein die christliche Kultur konnte einen Voltaire hervorbringen oder einen Nietzsche. Ich halte es für ausgeschlossen, dass die europäische Kultur den völligen Untergang des christlichen Glaubens überleben könnte. Diese Überzeugung hege ich nicht nur, weil ich selbst Christ bin, sondern weil ich mich mit dem Studium der modernen Gesellschaft befasst habe. Das Ende des Christentums wäre das Ende unserer ganzen Kultur. Dann müssten wir mühselig von vorne beginnen, denn eine Kultur lässt sich nicht fertig übernehmen. Dann müssten wir warten, bis das Gras gewachsen ist, das den Schafen Futter gibt, aus deren Wolle das neue Kleid gewebt werden kann. Jahrhunderte der Barbarei würden vergehen müssen. Wir würden die neue Kultur nicht mehr erleben, und auch nicht unsere Kinder und Kindeskinder; und wenn wir sie selbst erlebten, so würde nicht ein einziger unter uns daran Freude haben.

Wir verdanken der Erbschaft des Christentums mehr, viel mehr als den christlichen Glauben. In seinem Wandel durch die Zeiten erleben wir die allmähliche Entwicklung unserer Künste; ihm verdanken wir die Begriffe des römischen Rechts, die zur Formung unserer westlichen Welt so stark beigetragen haben; ihm verdanken wir unsere Begriffe individueller und öffentlicher Moral. Das Christentum übermittelte uns schließlich die Literaturen Griechenlands und Roms, die heute unseren gemeinsamen literarischen Maßstab bilden. Auf dieser Erbschaft beruht die Einheit der westlichen Welt: auf dem Christentum und den antiken Zivilisationen Griechenlands, Roms und Israels, von denen wir durch zwei Jahrtausende der christlichen Ära unsere Herkunft ableiten. Ich will diesen Punkt hier nicht weiter ausführen. Betonen aber möchte ich: Die jahrhundertelange Gemeinsamkeit kultureller Werte ist das wahre Band zwischen uns allen. Was uns diese kulturelle Einheit gibt, das kann keine politische oder wirtschaftliche Organisation ersetzen, sei sie noch so machtvoll. Wenn wir unser gemeinsames Erbe verschleudern, dann hilft uns keine Organisation, dann vermögen auch die Pläne der klügsten Köpfe nicht, uns einander näher zu bringen.

Die Einheit der Kultur, im Gegensatz zur Einheit der politischen Organisation, verlangt von uns nicht, dass wir nur einem Herrn dienen.

Sie bringt Loyalität verschiedener Art mit sich. Es ist schon falsch anzunehmen, dass das Individuum nur eine Pflicht hat: die Pflicht gegenüber dem Staat. Geradezu haarsträubend scheint mir aber die Ansicht, diese oberste Pflicht jedes Individuums bestünde gegenüber einem Super-Staat. Was ich mit „Loyalität verschiedener Art" meine, möchte ich an einem Beispiel klarmachen, am Beispiel der Universitäten. Keine Universität sollte eine bloße nationale Institution sein, selbst wenn sie von der Nation erhalten wird. Die europäischen Universitäten sollten ihre gemeinsamen Ideale entwickeln und ihre Verpflichtungen gegeneinander anerkennen. Sie sollten unabhängig sein von der Regierung ihres eigenen Landes. Universitäten dürften keine Ausbildungsschulen für einen tüchtigen Beamtenstab sein, und keine Institute, in denen Wissenschaftler Wege gelehrt werden, um ausländische Wissenschaftler zu übertrumpfen. Universitäten sollten Stätten sein für die Pflege des Lernens, für das Streben nach Wahrheit und – soweit es dem Menschen vergönnt ist – für die Erlangung von Weisheit.

Ich hätte gern noch viel mehr gesagt, aber ich muss mich jetzt kurz fassen. Mein letztes Wort gilt den Männern des Geistes in Europa, auf deren Schultern eine besondere Verantwortung liegt: die Erhaltung und Weitergabe unserer gemeinsamen Kultur. Wir mögen politisch ganz verschieden denken: unser aller Pflicht ist es jedoch, unsere gemeinsame Kultur vor dem Ansturm der Politik zu bewahren. Von gefühlsmäßigen Dingen kann man dabei ganz absehen. Es kommt nicht so sehr darauf an, ob wir miteinander sympathisieren, ob wir einander Komplimente über unsere Bücher machen. Das Wesentliche ist, dass wir uns klar sind über das Band, das uns miteinander verknüpft, über unsere Abhängigkeit voneinander. Das Wesentliche ist, dass isoliert, von den anderen abgeschnitten, keiner von uns imstande ist, Werke zu schaffen, die von unserer hohen Zivilisation Zeugnis ablegen. Persönliche Verbindungen herzustellen ist in diesem Augenblick nahezu unmöglich. Als Privatpersonen einander besuchen können wir nicht. Wenn wir im gegenwärtigen Moment überhaupt ins Ausland reisen, geschieht es dienstlich und im Auftrag der Regierung. Aber jeder von uns kann zum Mindesten im eigenen Lande versuchen, etwas von den Werten zu retten, die uns allen gemeinsam anvertraut worden sind: das Erbe Roms, Griechenlands und Israels, das Erbe der zweitausendjährigen Kultur Europas. In einer Zeit, die so maßlose Zerstörungen erlebt hat wie die unsrige, sind auch diese geistigen Güter in unmittelbarer Gefahr.

NOTES

1. *Trans*: The Unity of European Culture. These three talks were broadcast on the BBC German Service on 10, 17, and 24 Mar 1946, as part of the series "Lebendiges Abendland" [Living West]. TSE himself recorded, in German, the beginning of the first talk and the end of the last. The texts were published in English and German (translation by Leonie Hiller) on facing pages (4-59), with an article by Hans Hennecke, "T. S. Eliot," in German only (61-64). The volume was not published elsewhere. TSE's broadcast script is titled "Reflections of an English Poet on European Culture"; the three talks were published separately in English as "Reflections on the Unity of European Culture" in three successive issues of Miron Grindea's *ADAM International Review*, 14 (May 1946, 1-3), (June/July, 1-3), and (Aug, 20-22). They appear as "The Unity of European Culture" in an appendix to both the UK (1948) and the US (1949) editions of *NTDC*.

The fourteen underlined words in TSE's typescript were published in italics in *ADAM International Review* (*AIR*), retained here, but ignored in both editions of *NTDC*; the German volume uses letterspacing for emphasis. The spelling of the German translation has been modernized following the orthography reform of 1996 (revised in 2004 and 2006).

2†. In *AIR*, the opening sentence reads: "Before speaking on such a large subject, I think that I should present my credentials."

3. TSE was the founding editor of *The Criterion*, published from Oct 1922 to Jan 1939.

4. The incursions and settlements of the Vikings in the ninth century, checked finally in 878 by King Alfred's victory at Edington, led to a blending of cultures and languages in and around the large region established as the Danelaw. The early eleventh century saw successful invasions by King Sweyn Forkbeard and his son Canute, culminating in Danish rule of England from 1016 to 1042. The Norman conquest followed in 1066.

5. Goethe's sonnet "Natur und Kunst" ("Nature and Art") concludes: "In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister, / Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben"; *trans*: The master first reveals himself in limitation, / And the law alone can give us liberty.

6. Aided by the unpublished notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa, Pound translated and published nineteen pieces of classical Chinese poetry in *Cathay* (1915). TSE remarked in his Introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems* (1928) that "Pound is the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" and predicted that in three-hundred years *Cathay* would be called "'a magnificent specimen of XXth Century poetry' rather than a 'translation'" (3.523-24). In 1917 Pound arranged for the publication of Arthur Waley's first translations in the *Little Review*. Waley (1889-1966), an English Orientalist who went on to publish numerous translations of Chinese and Japanese poetry, was at the time of TSE's broadcast a fellow of King's College London, and was preparing to bring out his *Chinese Poems* (1946).

7. TSE's language recalls his 1919 essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent": "The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered" (2.106).

8. Edited during the German occupation by the collaborationist Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *NRF*, the Parisian literary monthly, was banned in Nov 1944. The Berlin-based *Neue Rundschau* was shut down by the Nazis in 1944 but resurrected (temporarily in Stockholm) the following year. *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* was edited in Zurich by Max Rychner from 1922 to 1933,

Revista de Occidente in Madrid by José Ortega y Gasset from 1923 to 1936. The Milan-based *Il Convegno*, closely associated with Futurism, ceased publication in 1939.

9. TSE first corresponded with Haecker in 1930, and in 1933, he tried unsuccessfully to publish a translation of Haecker's *Vergil, Vater des Abendlandes* at Faber & Faber. The book was instead published the following year by Sheed & Ward as *Virgil, Father of the West*; TSE would cite it repeatedly in his criticism. He also chose a passage from Haecker's *Was ist der Mensch?* as the epigraph to *ASG* (5.48, n.1). Haecker died on 9 Apr 1945.

10†. In *AIR*: a paragraph break occurs here.

Memorandum on Catholicity

In Nov 1945 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, invited Rev. Dom Gregory Dix, monk of Nashdom Abbey, to convene a group of Anglicans of the "Catholic" school of thought "to examine the causes of the deadlock which occurs in discussion between Catholics and Protestants and to consider whether any synthesis between Catholicism and Protestantism is possible." TSE was the only layman among fourteen members of a committee constituted in Jan 1946 and chaired by Rev. A. M. Ramsay, Canon of Durham. Meetings were held in Jan, Apr, and Sept 1946, with a concluding session in Jan 1947 to put their unanimous report in final form: a fifty-six page pamphlet titled *Catholicity: A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West* (London: Dacre Press, 1947), with TSE one of the signatories on the cover and title page. In his Foreword, the Archbishop described the report as "an honest attempt to bring into one view the chief elements in the separate Christian traditions and to show how they have suffered by separation" (5).

TSE was unable to attend the committee's second session of 22-24 Apr 1946 in Oxford, but his memorandum was submitted and read. According to the minutes, "It was received by the Group with cordial admiration and gratitude. No final decision was reached, whether it should be incorporated into the Report, or appear as an appendix to the Report, or be published separately. The opinion was expressed that it needed to be more continuously expressed with regard (a) to social differences (b) to South India."

TSE's memorandum (carbon) and the minutes of the Apr meeting are in the University of York, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, Mirfield Deposit 8/15. No part of TSE's text is quoted directly in the report, which Donald Gallup thus excluded from his bibliography in 1969 "on the grounds that it is impossible to determine the extent of T. S. Eliot's contribution" (Gallup 12).

The background of these notes is given in a paper I contributed to *Prospect for Christendom*.[1] I am aware that the thesis there stated is, in that form, still open to grave misunderstanding, but I am obliged to take it, for the moment, as a satisfactory statement so far as it goes.

I assume that every primitive culture (in the anthropological sense) at the beginning shows no division between "religious" and "secular" activities. From a religious point of view, the cultural element is of religious origin; from a "secular" anthropological point of view, the religion springs out of the culture. There is no point in trying to reconcile these two opposite assumptions. What matters is, that at any stage of society, however developed, the religion and the culture will continue to influence each other.

The particular concern of this committee, I believe, is the problem of re-union between religious bodies in this island. Now, according to my premisses, the formation of a schismatic sect may partly be due to cultural differences expressing themselves in religious differences; and whether this is the case or not, the religious separation will be followed by a cultural separation.

The separation of the Eastern and Western Church is too large a subject for me to touch upon, and I am too ignorant to venture to say anything about it. Ideally, in a united Christendom, there would be a general Christian culture, with an indefinite number of local and racial realisations of this culture – which would, indeed, only be actual in its variety of local forms. In an ideal united Church the local variations would be checked by each other. That is to say, each society (as conscious in its spiritual leaders and superior intellectual members) would be aware of what pertained to it as local, and of what was universal. It would not confuse its universal faith with its particular forms of devotion and worship: and it would not confuse its religion with its culture. But I have called this an "ideal" condition because the struggle between local culture and universal faith is endless. It is observable in the Irish, that their devotion to the Roman See has received constant stimulation from their resentment towards England: Ireland is not the only case of religious and nationalistic feelings supporting each other. A universal faith is always in danger from the local cultures, though it is only in these local cultures that it can, so to speak, be realised in the whole lives of the individuals.

We have, in the history of Western Europe, a "European culture" of which there are some vestiges left. The growth of national cultures in the late middle ages exceeded the capacity of the Church in those times to contain them: just as the Church of England failed to contain Methodism.[2] The separation of the Church of England brought about a distinct English sub-culture, and the Reformation in Scotland a distinct Scottish sub-culture.[3] The formation of dissenting sects in England has produced a number of sub-sub-cultures: but for practical purposes, in our time, the sub-sub-cultures represented by the several Free Churches are almost indistinguishable from each other.

What may here be remarked is that a sub-culture is always inferior to the culture from which it has branched off. (I hope this will not be taken too literally: I do not mean that one can grade "cultivated" and "uncultivated" persons according to their religious confession. Nor do I mean that the culture of England is inferior to that of Ireland – in some important respects it has been vastly superior! There is also a complication when a sub-culture has been long and widely established: for England the Roman Catholics may be considered as forming, like the other dissenters, a sub-culture of their own in relation to the Anglican culture.) It should also be remarked that the parent culture is also diminished by the separation of any sub-culture out of it. (Not every minor sect, of course, is significant enough to be said to constitute a sub-culture.) In short, a re-union on the highest level should be also a re-union of cultures such that the culture of all the parts would be superior to what it is in fragmentation.

A re-union on the highest level must also be a re-union on the deepest level of the natural life of Christians. Such schemes as South India seem to be the work of ecclesiastics (if I can say so without odium, of ecclesiastical politicians) without theologians.[4] It is the business of the theologians on this committee to insist upon the place of theology in re-union schemes. But what you have to unite are not merely governments, but peoples. So any re-union is flimsy which is not also a re-union of cultures.

This last sentence indicates how vast are the difficulties to be overcome. A re-union will be a re-union of parts all of which have changed since their separation: a very different thing from putting together the pieces of a broken pot. These parts have learnt to do without each other, to a certain degree. (Yet Protestantism depends, I think, to a larger degree than is suspected, upon the continuing existence of that against which it protests.) The new whole could not, accordingly, be identical with the original whole, though we might hope that it would be something like what the original whole would have become by that time if it had remained whole.

The new whole (I am confining my frame, both because of the terms of reference of this committee and because of greater manageability, to the union of dissenting bodies with the Church of England in England) would find itself in a very different situation from the original whole. It would be a union of Christians against a non-Christianity of indefinable extent, but certainly representing the great majority of the inhabitants of this country. In the process of growing together it would find itself confronted with the obstacle of the unreligious pseudo-culture amongst which we live. (This process, as my terminology indicates, would not be quite inter pares.[5] The superior culture would have to assimilate the inferior. Here, the resentment of dissenters against their social inferiority plays its part in preventing assimilation: they do not generally wish to achieve equality, they wish to obtain the recognition of an actual equality.)

The desire for a unity of religion and culture is universal. It plays a large part in fostering the acceptance of totalitarian governments, which offer the appearance of such a unity.

Now I do not think that Anglicanism, which is the communion of the main tradition of English culture, is now strong enough to assimilate the dissenting elements. I think that it would merely be adulterated further by them. We can find some justification for this guess, from considering the British Council of Churches.[6] It is not merely that no document put forward by this body can have any more weight than the sum of the individual members can give it – members who cannot speak authoritatively even for their own denominations. It is rather that the sum of a number of "churches" produces something less, instead of something more, than a whole individual "church." The views expressed should not only spring from more definite theological sources than such a composite body can supply; they should express the mind of a Church through many generations, as interpreted, for the situation under consideration, by its best minds of the present generation. But this is impossible for an organization which has no ancestry. The view of any one church mind, whether it be the Anglican, or the Presbyterian, or the Congregationalist, or any other, would be more likely to carry weight, than a view arrived at by negotiation and compromise between them.

Similarly the culture corresponding to the religion of an artificially united church would, I believe, be something mediocre and without character. It would in fact be so negative that it would have little resistance to the non-Christian environment. I am here depending upon my thesis that a religion must have its appropriate culture, just as a culture cannot be created, and cannot maintain itself, divorced from religion. The belief that as Christianity developed in a pagan environment, so it can accommodate itself to the environment of today, simply is not true. Early Christianity took over a culture which was still strong, while the religion that had formed it was in decay: somewhat as a hermit crab takes over the shell of a deceased crustacean.[7] The present time, when our culture is still weaker than our religion, and in a state to contract the most virulent disease, is a most inappropriate moment for experimenting in this way with what is left of it.

A predisposing cause of the present inclinations towards re-union is probably this very weakening of our culture. At a time when the attachment between religion and culture is strong, the minutest details of difference of ritual and behavior assume, in inter-Christian conflict, an exaggerated importance. Looking back upon such disputes, from our contemporary world, much of the matter of controversy and violent feelings seems absurd: we do not understand how much these apparent trifles symbolised for the participants in the struggle. That was the excess of identifying the culture with the religion: our characteristic error today is to separate the two, and imagine that we can satisfactorily sustain our religion and yet share in a culture which has less and less connection with it. It is partly because we are all immersed in a more and more uniform non-Christian declining culture, that we are ready to unite on a basis of an abstract Christianity. The progressive levelling of society, the demolition of the social barriers between the Christian groups and the disappearance of the positive characteristics of all of them, dispose people to belittle even the genuine theological differences.

And yet, on the other hand, it is now the social traditions, rather than the pure religious beliefs, that are a strong obstacle to any really organic re-union. As the religious divisions of England have tended to follow class divisions, the dissenting point of view must, to an Anglican, often appear to show an irritable sensibility rather than a sweet reasonableness, and to mask social prejudice behind religious conviction. But it must be recognised that a certain group loyalty, a loyalty to the tradition of a sect, is by no means ignoble, but rather a good and healthy feeling. How, in re-union, is each group to retain its loyalty to its own past? The individual convert can assimilate himself to another tradition: but we are not concerned with individual conversions. The facile way of re-union, rendered so much easier by the general state of society today, is for everybody to give up his traditions: and this is re-union on such a low religious and cultural level, that we can say that the only hope for Christianity in England is that such re-union will be avoided.[8]

The assumption behind South India is, that if you can only find a formulation, however ambiguous or deceptive, which will bring people together in name, the growing together will follow afterwards. The belief behind what I have been saying is, that exactly the reverse of this process provides the greater hope. In India, for instance, I fear that a nominal union such as that of the present scheme, would surely expose the Indian Christians more completely to the insidious influence of Indian culture: so that one would not be surprised, in a generation or two, to find Indian deities ensconced in chapels in Christian churches.

Enthusiasts for re-union at any price should be invited to consider, as dispassionately as they can, the question whether a partiality re-united Christianity might not, under contemporary conditions, be indeed weaker than a divided Christianity.

NOTES

1. TSE's "Cultural Forces in the Human Order" (6.605) was published in *Prospect for Christendom: Essays in Catholic Social Reconstruction*, ed. Maurice B. Reckitt (London: Faber & Faber, 1945). Two members of the present committee, the Rev. V. A. Demant, Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Rev. Charles Smyth, Dean of Chapel of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, were also contributors.

2. Although John Wesley's Methodist revival began as a reformation movement within the Church of England, it separated itself gradually from the established Church as it flourished in the late eighteenth century.

3. The Church of England broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 1534, and the Church of Scotland followed in 1560.

4. TSE addressed the interdenominational scheme for a Church of South India in letters to the *Times* of 19 and 25 Mar 1943 (6.383, 6.385), and in his pamphlet of the same year, *Reunion by Destruction* (6.447).

5. *inter pares* (Latin): among equals

6. The British Council of Churches was an ecumenical organization formed in 1942 to foster dialogue among the Christian denominations and to promote their common interests.

7. TSE discusses the hermit crab in line 19 of *The Dry Salvages* in a Jan 1945 letter to the *NEW*: "It was, of course, the horse-shoe crab that I had in mind" (6.586).

8. "When it comes to synthesis," Archbishop Fisher wrote in his foreword, "[the report] shows perhaps more of anxiety to avoid wrong methods than of ability to elaborate a right method. But the general description which it gives of the right method will command general consent. 'That unity,' it says, 'which must be reborn will include something of all the patterns, not in their falsities and negations but in those elements of devotion and conviction, of dogma and discipline which they contain.'" (5).

Preface to *The Dark Side of the Moon* [by Zoe Zajdlerowa][1]

London: Faber & Faber, 1946. Pp. 232; Preface, 5-8.

The manuscript of this book came into my hands over a year ago.[2] The book is the story of what happened to Poland, and of what happened to innumerable Poles, between 1939 and 1945.[3] It is also a book about the U.S.S.R. It is incidentally a book about Europe – not the Europe with which we were familiar in the past, but the Europe in which we now have to live.[4†] The aim of the book is to provide a record and to state a case: as dispassionately and fairly as is possible for a book, written by one of a people who have suffered so deeply as the Poles have suffered. I think that the author displays admirable moderation.[5] The case is here stated: if there is a case for the other side, we have yet to hear it.

The contributor of a prefatory note to a book of this kind need not rehearse its contents. What is more important is to dispose of certain obstructions which may present themselves in the minds of some readers. There are those whose attention is engrossed by the immediate present, for whom each new iniquity obliterates the memory of its predecessor, and through whose minds a succession of sensations, apprehensions, and grievances has passed since the events here related took place: to them this review will seem only a document to be filed for the use, or for the curiosity, of future students of history. That this record should be preserved and meditated upon by posterity is certainly to be desired; and if it had been written only for that purpose it would still have been worth the writing. To others, the book will be distasteful as a story of suffering which is past, as an inventory of grief which cannot now be appeased, and therefore might as well be forgotten. But even if concerned with wrongs which cannot now be amended, the subject matter is not such as we in this country have the right to avert our eyes from.[6†] It is not for the nation which declared war upon Germany because of her violation of the Polish frontier, and which subsequently was glad to avail itself of Polish soldiers and airmen whose gallantry and sacrifice have served our cause and not their own – it is not for us to forget Poland, or to decline to contemplate now, facts which were given no prominence in the Press when they were news. This reason alone would justify the publication of this book in England.

I have said that this is also a book about the Europe in which we now live. It is indeed a book about the world in which we now live. That this is not only a different world, but a less moral one than the world of six years ago is a truth of which we cannot expect to be reminded by those who are engaged in public affairs. Yet it is a truth which must be obvious to everyone who thinks, and indeed to many simple minds which are not given credit for thought. We have often been told, in the last few years, that it was going to be a better world; but it sometimes appears to present two faces: that of a public world which becomes more and more incredible, and a private world which becomes more and more intolerable. For the two worlds we have two languages: one for public oratory, and the other for conversation. To speak somewhat more clearly, it is our political language that is becoming antiquated. We still negotiate with other nations as if our business with them were limited to such matters as can be formalized and dealt with by one or several government departments. The period between the wars was a very confused one; but before 1914 the balance of power, together with the initiative, lay between states which had a long common history, and a certain common heritage of traditions, states which had had relations with each other – though only fitfully friendly relations – since their beginnings. Their political exchanges were not carried on without trickery and deceit: but when politicians lied, they lied in the same terms; when they were guilty of hypocrisy, and hypocrisy was frequent enough, it was the same God whose name they took in vain. Hence there was always a great deal that could be taken for granted: politics was one thing, commerce another, and intellectual relations a third. But we are now at a stage at which relations between nations, in peace as in war, become "total." The great powers and the nascent powers stretch all over the globe and comprehend a great variety of types of culture; issues between them extend deeper than ever before, and offer possibilities of much greater misunderstandings. Perhaps the recent appearance of "Departments of Cultural Relations" and the appointment to embassies of "Cultural Attachés" indicate some dim and confused awareness, on the part of governments, that politics in the old sense is no longer the whole of policy?

We are, in fact, in a period of conflict between cultures – a conflict which finds the older cultures in a position of disadvantage: from lack of confidence in themselves, from divisions both internal and between each other, from the inheritance of old abuses from the past aggravated by abuses due to the hasty introduction of novelties. The Liberal still thinks in terms of political differences which can be settled by negotiation, and of religious differences which have ceased to matter; he assumes further that the cultural conflict is one which can, like political conflict, be adjusted by compromise, or, like religious conflict, be resolved by tolerance. But the culture conflict is the religious conflict on its deepest level: it is one whole pattern of life against another. This conflict was precipitated by Germany's repudiation of Europe, and Japan's repudiation of Asia – for Japan, however successfully she exploited anti-European feeling in Asia, would have proved no more sympathetic or representative a ruler of Asia than Germany of Europe. These two aggressive nations, however, did but bring to a head a malady with which the world was already infected; and their collapse only leaves the world with the disease in every part of its body.

The frantic attempt, either through assembling representatives of more and more nations in public, or through discussions between leaders of fewer and fewer nations in private, to find a political solution of what is not merely a political problem, can therefore lead only to temporary and illusory benefits, unless the deeper problem is faced and pondered. The assumptions upon which world congresses find themselves working, are that we have all fundamentally the same moral principles and the same ideals; that we are all at the same stage of civilization; and that we have found the common denominator which enables us to speak of "civilization" in the singular, and not merely of irreducible or unreduced types of civilization. The real problem is to find a way in which very different cultures, incarnate in nations of every degree of power or feebleness, can flourish in amity and concord. A politician or an economist who can appreciate this problem is a very exceptional man, possessed of a wisdom springing from another source than his political acumen and experience, or his scientific learning and ingenuity.

I have permitted myself these general observations, as a preparation for the statement that this is not a political book. It is in part a record of "politics"; but the book as a whole is a document for the study of the methods of destroying a culture, one pattern of life, and imposing another pattern. We do not yet know to what extent such a transformation can be effected; we do not know to what extent a people can be altered by the power of planned ignorance. The mutilation of a people by the destruction of its upper and middle classes is serious enough: but that is an injury which a people can inflict upon itself. Whether a culture can survive systematic destruction from without, depends less upon its forces of active revolt, than upon the stubbornness of the unconscious masses, the tenacity with which they cling to habits and customs, their instinctive resistance to change. A year ago, this would have seemed to be a book only about Poland: it is now a book about one instance of a general problem.[7] And the problem in its most general form is not merely the problem of the U.S.S.R.

For a European, the problem is whether Europe can survive. I do not mean, of course, merely the physical survival or the material comfort of the inhabitants, but the survival of the civilization of Western Europe. For survival means continual new creative activity in the arts and sciences and the maintenance of *civility* in social life. Whether this is possible, with the chief centres of material power and wealth elsewhere, I venture no opinion. At the present time, every country of Western Europe has within itself germs of decay and elements of discord; nowhere are there wanting individuals of much ambition and little scruple, to find their happiness and self-fulfilment in destruction, and sell their country's civilization to put themselves in power; men for whom any change that magnifies their own importance is a change for the better. These divided countries tend to lose those values the preservation of which provided a common bond. Justice itself tends to be corrupted by political passion; and that meddling in other people's affairs which was formerly conducted by the most discreet intrigue is now openly advocated under the name of intervention. Nations which once shrank from condemning the most flagitious violation of human rights in Germany, are now exhorted to interfere in other countries' government – and always in the name of peace and concord. Respect for the culture, the pattern of life, of other people – which is not the same thing as indifference to other people's crimes against humanity – is respect for history: and by history we set no great store. And if culture can only flourish in the centres of the greatest political and economic power, then it is not likely to flourish in Europe. I leave the reader to judge whether these reflections are pertinent to this account of the ordeal of a people which he is about to peruse.[8]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The Irish-born writer Zoe Zajdlerowa (or Zajdler), née Girling (1905-68) had previously published several novels under the pseudonym Martin Hare. Captured by the Germans as they attempted to flee Soviet-occupied Poland by ship, she and her Polish husband were imprisoned

by the Gestapo. Zajdlerowa was released and made her way to London; she never saw her husband again. Her experience of the first months of the war is recounted in an anonymous memoir, *My Name Is Million: The Experiences of an Englishwoman in Poland*, published by Faber in 1940.

Zajdlerowa chose to publish anonymously presumably to avoid reprisals against her family and friends in Poland, and against her husband, whose fate was still unknown. Her authorship of *The Dark Side of the Moon* was eventually revealed in 1981 by her literary agent, Spencer Curtis Brown. TSE, however, was aware of her identity and met with her, according to a letter of 10 May 1941 to Herbert Read, on at least one occasion.

2. TSE wrote Geoffrey Faber on 10 Feb 1945 that he had read the manuscript the previous day. Though apprehensive that the last part of the book, on the aftermath of the 1941 Soviet-Polish accord, might be controversial, he concluded that "it would take very strong representations indeed, on the part of anybody with inside knowledge of our diplomacy, to dissuade me from wanting to publish it, and even then I doubt whether I should be convinced." The book, as he explained to John Hayward on 12 Feb, was "very damaging to our Russian allies, and therefore a ticklish business." Circumstances ameliorated this difficulty, as the last chapter was not received until 28 June and was not yet in galley proofs when the war ended on 14 Aug. Nevertheless, on 5 Oct TSE agreed with his fellow directors that the book should "not appear until well on into the spring." It was published on 10 June 1946. TSE dated his preface 28 Jan.

3. *The Dark Side of the Moon* concerns the 1939 Soviet invasion and occupation of eastern Poland, the ensuing deportation of more than a million Poles to Siberia and Soviet Central Asia, and the continuation of Soviet oppression even after Stalin's 1941 pact with the Polish government-in-exile. On TSE's sympathy for the Poles, see his unpublished preface to *Roll Call* (1944), where he calls Poland "the greatest sufferer among the nations" (6.583).

A new edition of *The Dark Side of the Moon*, edited by John Coutouvidis and Thomas Lane, was published in 1989 with a scholarly introduction but without TSE's preface.

4†. In order to accommodate the perspective of American readers, TSE wrote to editor Max Perkins on 9 Aug 1946 suggesting "minor alterations" of wording for the American edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947). The first of these appears in the revision of "the Europe in which we now have to live" to "the Europe with which we now have to live" (vii).

5. In a prefatory note opposite the title page, Helena Sikorska explained that her late husband General Wladyslaw Sikorski, Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces until his death in 1943, had arranged for the author to receive access "to official material and documents" necessary for writing the book; that "he knew the author for a woman of scrupulous integrity and fairness"; and that "he had complete confidence that the material entrusted to her would be used always with a single purpose in view – the purpose of presenting truth as an essential preliminary to understanding and therefore to peace."

6†. For the American edition, TSE requested that this sentence be altered to read, "not such as we have the right to avert our eyes from," and he amended the wording in the remainder of the paragraph: "It is not for Britain, who declared war upon Germany because of the German attack upon Poland, and who subsequently was glad to avail herself of Polish soldiers and airmen whose gallantry and sacrifices have served her cause and not that of Poland – it is not for Britain to forget Poland, or to decline to contemplate now, facts which were given no prominence in the Press when they were news. Nor do I think that Americans should forget these things. This reason alone would justify the publication of this book in English-speaking countries" (vii-viii).

7. By 1946 the "Eastern Block" as it was to exist throughout the Cold War had taken shape, with several nations already absorbed into the Soviet Union and satellite states established in Central Europe. Winston Churchill's "Sinews of Peace" address, given on 5 Mar, would name the "general problem" TSE cites here the "iron curtain."

8. TSE's blurb for the front flap and back cover of the dust jacket reads as follows:

> The aim of this remarkable book is to provide a history of the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. from 1939 to 1945. It is the author's view that the latter date marks the end of that period of the revival of Poland as a sovereign state, which began at the end of the last war; and that the time has come to set forth the facts, not in any hope of presently influencing events, but simply as an historical record.
>
> The book is divided into three sections. The first gives a view of the U.S.S.R., of its geographical vastness and variety of races and cultures, together with some account of the rise and dominance of Muscovite power, and of the background of relations in earlier times between Muscovy and Poland. The second part consists of a selection of personal narratives, from amongst a very large number to which the author has had access, of Poles who have suffered during the Russian occupation. We have first the narratives of deportation into the U.S.S.R. and the sufferings of deportees on the journey; second, the account of life in Russian prisons and prison camps. Some of these accounts were given by children. The third section of the book recounts the official relations of the Government of the U.S.S.R. with the Polish Government in exile, with General Sikorski and with the Polish Embassy in Kyubishev, with the Polish Army which was formed on Russian soil, and with the Underground patriots in Poland.
>
> For reasons which need not be pointed out, the author of this book prefers to remain anonymous. We believe that the reader will be impressed by the detachment and fairness of mind displayed. We publish this book in the belief that the cause of peace and amity is best served by understanding, and that understanding requires knowledge of the facts, and that every nation's case must be freely and fully put before the public.

John Maynard Keynes[1]

The New English Weekly, 29 (16 May 1946) 47-48

What one immediately remarked, and most distinctly remembered, about Maynard Keynes, when first meeting him twenty-five or more years ago, was a very exceptional intelligence. The use of "intelligence" here suggests the French, rather than the English associations of the word. That is already, however, making a suggestion which needs at once to be corrected. It is on a somewhat lower level, that of the most alert un-creative mind, that intelligence is a French rather than an English characteristic. When it is united to a powerful and original intellect, it is probably as rare in one race as in another. Certainly, Keynes was quite English, and, in any sense of the word, an "intellectual." That is to say, he was born into, and always lived in, an intellectual environment; he had intellectual tastes; and he had – what is not always denoted by "intellectual" – an intellect. But his mind was also intelligent: it was highly sceptical, and free from the bias of enthusiasm; furthermore, it was a free mind, in that his interests were not limited by the activities in which his talents were supreme. A sense of humour, a lively but kindly curiosity about human beings, and a love of society and good conversation, combined to prevent him from becoming either a doctrinaire or a scholarly recluse.

Men of great eminence, even those whose fame entitles them to two columns in *The Times*, are not always fortunate in their obituary notices.[2] Keynes's death came suddenly – and unexpectedly – at a moment when his most recent public services were still fresh in the public memory.[3] He received as much justice as any man's friends can hope for. But there is one thing about him to which I found no allusion, which had, in the latter years, impressed me strongly. My own opinion needs, perhaps, the confirmation of those who knew him better than I, when I say that what impresses me most, looking back over a quarter of a century, is his growth from intelligence and intellect to greatness. No achievement, either in theoretic economics or in public life, could have caused surprise: but what one could not have anticipated was that he would become a great statesman and a great man.

Probably that unusual combination of speculative genius and practical ability, at which I have just hinted, provided at least a necessary condition for this development. After his experience of Versailles, and the publication of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (the only one of his books which I have ever read: I was at that time occupied, in a humble capacity, with the application of some of the minor financial clauses of that treaty) one rather expected him to retire from public life for ever.[4] A man like Keynes, so much more intelligent, as well as more intellectual, than the men in public life with whom he had to deal, might well have withdrawn permanently, in amused and hopeless contempt, from the public scene, to exert his influence solely upon his pupils in the university where his name was already venerated. He foresaw the consequences of bad economics corrupted further by political passion and expediency, and the consequences were realised. Disdainful aloofness would have been the natural resort. His intelligence would always have saved him from becoming a bonze or a bigot; but it might have exposed him to the temptations of cynicism – and certainly, he had at his command a cynical wit which sometimes expressed itself in conversation, when public affairs or economic doctrines were touched upon in private company. I remember his once admitting that Douglas's proposals were quite good, though not so good as his own – with the implication that, as neither had the slightest likelihood of being accepted, it didn't much matter.[5]

Keynes had already, before he became a public figure, demonstrated his administrative ability at the Treasury, and his business shrewdness in his college, the affairs of which he conducted, I believe, to prosperity unexampled in its history.[6] He had also the gifts of a great gambler: the intuition, and the courage to obey his intuition. Had he had the ambition and the lack of scruple, and the lack of interest in any superior activity, he might have cut a larger figure than Kreuger or Stavisky or any of the famous miscreants of that age.[7] People like the latter, to be sure, always have a coarseness of fibre, a crudity of taste, and a childish napoleonic craving, which were as alien to Keynes's temperament as to his intelligence. But when he went into the City – and his capability not merely for excelling in several pursuits, but for carrying them on simultaneously was astonishing – one feared that it would mean only a dissipation of energy, a display of virtuosity, by a man who could do so many things so easily that he was in danger of not cultivating his special gifts to the utmost.[8]

Such a fear has proved to have been without foundation. His apparently scattered interests now appear as essential moments in a total development. Of the growth and change of his economic views I am quite incompetent to speak: but it is evident that he had the free mind which is not afraid to change. I believe that his interest, ability and success in business affairs, together with the curiosity about human beings of which I have spoken, contributed to make him an economist of a very different type from that of any of his distinguished predecessors in that science. His mind was free in other ways also. He seemed, to my observation at least, to be without ambition. He had achieved unique distinction early, at Cambridge;[9] I do not think that he coveted distinction in the world at large, for he valued only the esteem of those whose judgment he respected. A lack of ambition, in the majority of able men, is likely to lead to futility. Such men may be those very learned dons who remain, for a generation or two, a local myth of their university, for no evidence of their profundity remains beyond the report of those who knew them. Such men also are those who excel in one activity after another, tiring of each as soon as they have demonstrated their superiority. But a few men appear to have a destiny which compels them to eminence without their desiring it, and which so controls their lives, that even their mistakes and follies appear to contribute to their progress and their success. Whether you call this character, or personality, or something beyond the individual's endowment, does not much matter. I have no reason to suppose that Keynes committed many follies; but I believe that in him all those various activities, which in another man would have been a spendthrift waste, somehow combined to one end. And at last the brilliant man, by some divine prestidigitation, was transformed into the great statesman. Perhaps the word "statesman" is too near the word "politician" for my purpose; but the word "public servant" on the other hand connotes the official and the pro-consul. For Keynes never seemed to participate in public life because of any hankering for its supposed rewards or gratifications, and he did not belong there by profession: he appeared only to be called there because he was necessary.

Keynes's mind was free, not only from the weakness of ambition, but from the obstruction of his own opinions. Certainly he remained always a Liberal; but he was singularly free from the intolerance of those who believe themselves emancipated; and he tended to free himself from the emotional prejudices of Liberalism. Tolerant himself – he could hardly have endorsed all the views of the weekly paper which he had done a great deal to maintain[10] – he would sometimes show originality of reflection, and independence of judgment, on matters over which he could claim no special authority, and on which the consensus of his friends was differently fixed. In artistic and literary questions, he was inclined to defer to those whose work he admired. He was often right in doing so, and certainly for his patronage of drama, ballet and music we owe much to the influence of his wife.[11] He respected the authority of the artist in his own field; and he manifested his love of the arts, not by any pretension to connoisseurship, but by lending his incomparable ingenuity to the tasks of organisation and finance, as in his creation of the Arts Theatre in Cambridge, and in his direction of the Arts Council.[12] The desire for power or notoriety was absent from his patronage of art as from his other activities; and he was all the greater patron for this reason.

In one art, certainly, he had no reason to defer to any opinion: in expository prose he had the essential style of the clear mind which thinks structurally and respects the meanings of words. He had been both a classical and a mathematical scholar: he had excelled under those two best disciplines which, when imposed upon an uncommon mind capable of profiting by both, should co-operate to produce lucid thinking and correct expression.[13] And, unlike some other brilliant scholars, he had continued throughout his life to feed and exercise his mind by wide reading in English and other literature. No man could have had greater advantages of background, education and environment; no one, having these advantages, could have turned them to better account, or cultivated to a richer harvest the field which he was given to till. The appearance of a genius like Keynes's must be inexplicable and rare at any time; but we may reflect that the full development of any genius is favoured or thwarted by the state of Civilisation, and that the tendencies of our time are destructive of the conditions which favoured the full growth of such a mind as his.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Keynes died on 21 Apr 1946, and TSE composed this obituary the following week. Their acquaintance went back at least to 1923.

2. The *Times* of 22 Apr included an announcement of Keynes's death with tributes from Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton, and former Chancellor Sir John Anderson (4); a leading article on Keynes (5); and the two-column obituary to which TSE alludes (7).

3. In the 1940s Keynes had played important and visible roles in war finance, socioeconomic policy, and the establishment of the postwar international monetary system. His fatal heart attack may have been triggered by exhaustion.

4. Keynes resigned from the British delegation to Versailles several weeks before the Treaty was signed, when he became convinced that its provisions for German reparations would not be

ameliorated. He began work on *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* shortly thereafter, and the book, which is highly critical of the Treaty, was published in Dec 1919 to international acclaim. In early 1920, TSE was "put in charge of settling all the pre-War Debts between [Lloyds] Bank and Germans," as he reported to his mother on 15 Feb (*L1* 444). On 22 Feb he told her that his duties included "trying to elucidate knotty points in that appalling document the Peace Treaty" (*L1* 446).

5. C. H. Douglas's theory of Social Credit, championed by the *NEW* among others, had little support from mainstream economists.

6. Keynes served in the Treasury from 1915 until his resignation in 1919 over the Versailles Treaty. He studied at King's College, Cambridge (1902-05), and served as the college's bursar from 1924 until his death. In this capacity, as TSE suggests, he vastly augmented the college's resources through sound management and successful investment.

7. Ivar Kreuger (1880-1932), Swedish industrialist. The collapse of his vast business empire, built partly on fraud, triggered the international "Kreuger Crash" of 1932. Similarly, the political crisis following the death and exposure of Serge Alexandre Stavisky, the French financier and swindler (1886-1934), nearly brought down the Third Republic.

8. Keynes accepted work as an adviser and consultant in the City of London (i.e., the financial district) beginning in 1919.

9. Keynes achieved distinction even earlier, at Eton, and went to Cambridge on a competitive scholarship. The honors he won at Cambridge included the Members' English Essay Prize (for an essay on Burke).

10. In 1923, Keynes led a group of politically liberal investors who purchased the *Nation and Athenaeum*. TSE, who had contributed frequently to the *Athenaeum* under Middleton Murry's editorship (1919-21), continued to publish in the merged periodical, of which Leonard Woolf served as literary editor from 1923 to 1930. After a second merger in 1931, the paper became the *New Statesman and Nation*. Keynes exerted a strong influence as chairman of the board, but the *Times* obituary concurs with TSE's judgment: "he had too scrupulous a regard for editorial freedom for that paper to be in any sense a reflection of his own opinions" (7).

11. Lydia Vasilievna Keynes, née Lopokova, the eminent Russian ballerina, married the economist in 1925.

12. Keynes was instrumental in planning, financing, and supervising the Cambridge Arts Theatre, conceived as a town-and-university project, which opened in 1936. In 1942 he became chair of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, a foundation combining private funds and government grants to support the performing arts during wartime. At Keynes's instigation, this body was succeeded after the war by the Arts Council of Great Britain, which he also chaired.

13. Keynes's scholarship at King's College was in mathematics and classics.

Leçon de Valéry[1]

Cahiers du Sud, 276-78 (1946) 74-81

Only as many meetings, I think, as could be counted on the fingers: but these meetings were distributed at significant points in the twenty-one years ending in July 1945, twenty-one years during which Valéry, already recognised as a great poet, came to be a figure symbolic of the Europe of our time. As the author of *La Jeune Parque*, he had been introduced to English readers by Mr. J. Middleton Murry, writing in *The Times Literary Supplement* not long after that poem had been published; he was a famous man in 1924.[2] My impressions of him, from our first meeting to the last, are of a personality, certainly not simple or easily comprehended, but consistent throughout these years.[3] The social qualities and the charm – such an unaffected modesty of manner, more impressive than any grandeur, and the kind of impish wit that indicates a man who needs no assumed dignity – these were apparent at once. But only gradually it struck me that these qualities of manner were integral to his type of mind. His modesty and his informality were the qualities of a man without illusions, who maintained no pretence about himself to himself, and found it idle to pretend to others. He could play different roles, but he never lost himself in any. Of some great men, one's prevailing impression may be of goodness, or of inspiration, or of wisdom: I think the prevailing impression one received of Valéry was of intelligence.

Intelligence to the highest degree, and a type of intelligence which excludes the possibility of faith, implies profound melancholy. Valéry has been called a philosopher. But a philosopher, in the ordinary sense, is a man who constructs or supports a philosophic system; and in this sense, we can say that Valéry was too intelligent to be a philosopher. The constructive philosopher must have a religious faith, or some substitute for a religious faith; and generally he is only able to construct, because of his ability to blind himself to other points of view, or to remain unconscious of the emotive causes which attach him to his particular system. Valéry was much too conscious to be able to philosophise in this way; and so his "philosophy" lays itself open to the accusation of being only an elaborate game. Precisely, but to be able to play this game, to be able to take aesthetic delight in it, is one of the manifestations of civilised man. There is only one higher stage possible for civilised man: and that is to unite the profoundest scepticism with the deepest faith. But Valéry was not Pascal, and we have no right to ask that of him.[4] His was, I think, a profoundly destructive mind, even nihilistic. This cannot, one way or the other, alter our opinion of the poetry; it can neither abate nor magnify the pleasure or the admiration. But it should, I think, increase our admiration of the man who wrote the poetry. For the agony of *creation*, for a mind like Valéry's, must be very great. When the mind constantly mocks and dissuades, and urges that the creative activity is vain, then the slow genesis of a poem, and the hours, spread over years, required for the labour of perfecting it, are only possible by a desperate heroism which is a triumph of character. (Certainly, an English writer is expected at some point to mention "character.")

* * * *

L'Europe est finie, he said to me in May.[5] No doubt he had said the same to others. It was, after all, only a final affirmation of a view which he had expressed long before. There is a sense in which we may continue to hope that this is not true; and as we must continue to act and to speak, continue to protest against stupidity and evil and to applaud intelligence and excellence, we must continue to behave on the assumption that it is not true. But there is one other sense in which it is certainly true, and always true, for the creator of art. My language is finished, for me (and for a poet, his language represents his country, and Europe too) when I have come to the end of my resources, in endeavouring to extend and develop that language. For an artist who comes at the end of a period, art ends with himself. But between these two meanings there is an indeterminate area of meaning where my sympathies are also with Valéry. It is strange, but my intimacy with his poetry has been largely due to my study of what he has written about poetry. Of all poets, Valéry has been the most completely conscious (perhaps I should say the most nearly conscious) of what he was doing.[6] What he wrote about the composition of poetry is perhaps not true for all poets, for it remains an account, by a marvel of introspection, of what he alone was doing; yet I have found again and again that his analyses of the poetic process corresponded to my own experience, and brought much to light of which I had been but obscurely aware. "*L'Europe est finie*": Valéry's Europe is certainly finished, and I have to acknowledge that it is, in large part, my Europe too. But of all the poets, in any language, of the last thirty years, Valéry was the one with the best right to utter this remark: for it is he who will remain for posterity the representative poet, the symbol of the poet, of the first half of the twentieth century – not Yeats, not Rilke, not anyone else.

* * * *

I hope, in any case, that something will remain operative, on the further generations who will have different criteria, and who will adapt verse to different purposes – a *leçon de Valéry*. It would be impertinent of me to adjure French poets, or to tell them what they should do with a language which is not mine; but I can say this with equal urgency even if I am thinking only of English poets. The proper end of the romantic is to achieve the classic – that is to say, every language, to retain its vitality, must perpetually depart and return upon itself; but without the *departure* there is no return, and the *returning* is as important as the arrival. We have to return to where we started from, but the journey has altered the starting place: so that the place we left and the place we return to are the same and also different.[7] In Valéry a long curve of romanticism rejoins the classic. Now the journey has to be taken by new travellers, and not the next generation, or the next after that, will arrive. And each new journey is in some way more difficult than the last. But it is in this way that the great languages of Europe can be kept alive; and if they can be kept alive, then Europe is not finished.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

PUBLISHED TRANSLATION

À peine autant de rencontres, je crois, qu'on en pourrait compter sur les doigts de la main : mais elles se distribuent à des points significatifs le long des vingt et une années qui finissent en juillet 1945, vingt et une années pendant lesquelles Valéry, déjà reconnu comme un grand poète, en vint à être une figure symbolique de l'Europe de notre temps. Auteur de *La Jeune Parque*, il avait été présenté aux lecteurs anglais par M. J. Middleton Murry, dans un article du *Times Literary Supplement*, peu après que le poème eût été publié.[2] Il était célèbre en 1924. Mes impressions sur lui, de notre première rencontre à la dernière, sont celles d'une personnalité, certainement pas simple ou aisément appréhendée, mais cohérente à travers toutes ces années.[3] Les qualités sociales et le charme – modestie, simplicité des manières, plus impressionnantes que toute affectation de hauteur, et cette espèce d'esprit diabolique et taquin qui n'a nul besoin d'une dignité empruntée – étaient apparents dès l'abord. Mais ce ne fut que peu à peu que je découvris que ces

qualités de comportement faisaient partie intégrante de son type d'esprit. Sa modestie et sa simplicité étaient les qualités d'un homme sans illusions, qui ne cherchait pas à s'en faire accroire à lui-même, et trouvait inutile de berner autrui. Il pouvait jouer des rôles différents, mais il n'allait jamais jusqu'à se perdre dans aucun. De quelques grands hommes, l'impression prédominante qu'on peut avoir est de bonté, ou d'inspiration, ou de sagesse : je pense que l'impression prédominante que l'on recevait de Valéry était celle d'intelligence.

Intelligence au suprême degré, et type d'intelligence qui exclut la possibilité de la foi, implique une profonde mélancolie. On a appelé Valéry un philosophe. Mais un philosophe, au sens ordinaire, est un homme qui construit, ou qui défend, un système philosophique ; et nous pouvons, dans ce sens, dire que Valéry était trop intelligent pour être un philosophe. Il faut aux philosophes constructifs une foi religieuse, ou quelque substitut qui en tienne lieu ; et, généralement, il ne lui est permis de construire que parce qu'il peut rester aveugle aux autres points de vue, ou insensible aux raisons émotives qui l'attachent à son système particulier. Valéry était bien trop lucide pour pouvoir philosopher de cette façon ; en sorte que sa philosophie se trouve exposée à l'accusation de n'être qu'un jeu compliqué. Précisément, – mais pouvoir jouer ce jeu, pouvoir y goûter des joies artistiques, c'est une des manifestations de l'homme civilisé. Il n'y a qu'un seul degré plus élevé qu'il est possible à l'homme civilisé d'atteindre – et c'est d'unir le scepticisme le plus profond à la plus profonde foi. Mais Valéry n'était pas Pascal, et nous n'avons pas le droit de lui demander cela.[4] Son esprit était, je crois, profondément destructeur, – et même nihiliste. Ce qui ne peut, en aucune façon, changer notre opinion sur sa poésie ; ce qui ne peut non plus ni amoindrir, ni augmenter le plaisir de notre admiration, mais ce qui devrait, je crois, accroître notre admiration pour l'homme qui a écrit cette poésie. Car les affres de la *création*, pour un esprit comme le sien, ont dû être très grandes. Lorsque l'esprit constamment raille, et dissuade, et plaide avec ardeur que l'activité créatrice est vaine, alors la lente genèse d'un poème et les heures qui s'étendent sur des années, nécessaires pour l'amener à sa perfection, ne sont possibles que grâce à un héroïsme désespéré qui est un triomphe du caractère. (Évidemment, on s'attend à ce qu'un écrivain anglais fasse état du « caractère » en quelque point.)

* * * *

L'Europe est finie, me dit-il en mai.[5] Sans doute il avait dit la même chose à d'autres. Ce n'était, après tout, que l'affirmation définitive d'une vue qu'il avait exprimée depuis longtemps. Il y a un sens dans lequel nous pouvons continuer à espérer qu'elle est fausse ; et comme nous devons continuer à agir et à parler, continuer à protester contre la stupidité et le mal, et à applaudir l'intelligence et l'excellence, nous devons continuer à nous conduire comme si elle était fausse. Mais il y a un autre sens dans lequel elle est certainement vraie, et toujours vraie, pour le créateur d'art. Ma langue est finie pour moi (et pour un poète, sa langue représente son pays, et aussi l'Europe) lorsque j'en suis arrivé au bout de mes ressources dans mes efforts pour étendre et développer cette langue. Pour un artiste qui arrive au bout d'une période, l'art finit avec lui. Mais entre ces deux sens, s'étend une zone indéterminée de sens où mes sympathies vont aussi à Valéry. Tout étrange que ce soit, mon intimité avec sa poésie est due largement à mes études de ce qu'il a écrit sur la poésie. De tous les poètes, Valery a été le plus complètement lucide (peut-être devrais-je dire le plus proche de la lucidité) – au sujet de ce qu'il faisait.[6] Ce qu'il écrivit sur la composition de la poésie n'est peut-être pas vrai de tous les poètes, car c'est un compte-rendu, par une merveille d'introspection, de ce qu'il était seul à faire ; mais je me suis aperçu maintes et maintes fois que ses analyses du processus poétique correspondaient à mon analyse personnelle sur des points dont je n'avais eu qu'une conscience obscure. *L'Europe est finie* : l'Europe de Valéry est certainement finie, et je dois reconnaître, pour une grande partie, que c'est aussi mon Europe. Mais, de tous les poètes, en quelque langue que ce soit, des trente dernières années, Valéry était celui qui avait le meilleur droit de proférer cette remarque : car c'est lui qui restera, pour la postérité, le poète représentatif, le symbole du poète, de la première moitié du XXème siècle. Ce n'est pas Yeats, ni Rilke, ni personne d'autre.

J'espère, en tout cas, que quelque chose restera valable pour les générations à venir qui auront des critères différents, et qui adapteront le vers à des buts différents – une *leçon de Valéry*. Il serait impertinent de ma part d'adjurer les poètes français, ou de leur dire ce qu'ils ont à faire avec une langue qui n'est pas la mienne ; mais je peux dire ceci avec un égal sérieux, même si je ne pense qu'aux poètes anglais : le but authentique du romantique est de parachever le classique – c'est-à-dire que toute langue, pour garder sa vitalité, doit perpétuellement se quitter et se retrouver ; mais sans le départ il n'y a pas de retour, et le retour est aussi important que l'arrivée. Il nous faut revenir d'où nous sommes partis, mais le voyage a changé le point de départ : si bien que l'endroit que nous avons quitté et l'endroit où nous revenons sont les mêmes, et aussi différents.[7] Chez Valéry, une longue

courbe de romantisme rejoint le classique. Maintenant, ce sont de nouveaux voyageurs qui doivent commencer le voyage, et ce n'est pas la génération prochaine, ni même celle qui lui succèdera, qui arrivera. Et chaque nouveau voyage est de quelque manière plus difficile que le précédent. Mais c'est ainsi que les grandes langues d'Europe pourront rester vivantes, et si elles le peuvent, alors, l'Europe n'est pas finie.

NOTES

1. *Leçon de Valéry*: the lesson of Valéry. TSE's essay was printed in English, with a French translation by the literary critic Henri Fluchère (1898-1987) on facing pages. The Valéry issue of *Cahiers du Sud* was brought out simultaneously in nonserial form as *Paul Valéry vivant* (Marseille: Cahiers du Sud, 1946). Of the more than fifty contributions to the volume, TSE's is the only one not originally written in French.

Fluchère, who solicited TSE's contribution, had previously translated *Murder in the Cathedral* (1943) and was working in the mid-1940s on a translation of TSE's *Selected Essays* that would see publication in 1950. To Alain Verney on 17 Mar 1945, TSE would describe Fluchère, together with Jean de Menasce, as one of the "chief translators" of his work into French.

2. "La Jeune Parque" ("The Young Fate"), Valéry's long poem of 1917, a major contribution to French modernism. Murry's review, published in the *TLS* of 23 Aug 1917, calls Valéry "the authentic and the sole disciple of Mallarmé himself" (402).

3. It is uncertain when TSE and Valéry first met. Their correspondence begins in 1922. On 16 Oct 1923, TSE attended Valéry's lecture on Victor Hugo in London but, due to Vivien's ill health, was forced to decline an invitation to dine with him and Charles Whibley. The 1924 first meeting suggested in the present text is not mentioned in TSE's letters of that year.

4. In "The Pensées of Pascal" (1931), TSE calls Pascal "the type of one kind of religious believer, which is highly passionate and ardent, but passionate only through a powerful and regulated intellect," and he credits him with "facing unflinchingly the demon of doubt which is inseparable from the spirit of belief" (4.345).

5. *L'Europe est finie*: Europe is finished. Valéry served as chair when TSE read "The Social Function of Poetry" in Paris on 11 May 1945 (6.639). This occasion was not only the last meeting between the two poets, but Valéry's last appearance before the public. In the unpublished "Homage to Paul Valéry," written a few days after Valéry's death on 20 July 1945, TSE recalled: "When I last saw Valéry two months ago I knew myself [to be] in [the] presence of a dying man. . . . He was consciously facing death but the death the face of which he saw was the death of an epoch" (6.653).

6. In his 1948 lecture "From Poe to Valéry," TSE discusses Valéry's argument – which he traces to Poe – "that the composition of a poem should be as conscious and deliberate as possible, that the poet should observe himself in the act of composition" (*TCC* 40).

7. TSE's thoughts echo the final verse paragraph of *Little Gidding*: "And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time" (*CPP* 145; *Poems1* 208).

Ezra Pound[1]

Whatever may have been the literary scene in America between the beginning of the century and the year 1914, it remains in my mind a complete blank. I cannot remember the name of a single poet of that period whose work I read: it was only in 1915, after I came to England, that I heard the name of Robert Frost. Undergraduates at Harvard in my time read the English poets of the '90s who were dead: that was as near as we could get to any living tradition. Certainly I cannot remember any English poet then alive who contributed to my own education. Yeats was well known, of course; but to me, at least, Yeats did not appear, until after 1917, to be anything but a minor survivor of the '90s. (After that date, I saw him very differently. I remember clearly my impression of the first performance of "The Hawk's Well," in a London drawing room, with a celebrated Japanese dancer in the rôle of the hawk, to which Pound took me.[2] And thereafter one saw Yeats rather as a more eminent contemporary than an elder from whom one could learn). There were, in the early years of the century, a few good poets writing in England, but I did not know of their existence until later; and it was often Pound (whose appreciation was much more comprehensive than most people realise) who directed my attention to them. But I do not think it is too sweeping to say, that there was no poet, in either country, who could have been of use to a beginner in 1908. The only recourse was to poetry of another age and to poetry of another language. Browning was more of a hindrance than a help, for he had gone some way, but not far enough, in discovering a contemporary idiom. And at that stage, Poe and Whitman had to be seen through French eyes. The question was still: where do we go from Swinburne? and the answer appeared to be, nowhere.[3]

It is as well, in writing at the present moment about Pound, to acknowledge one's greatest personal debt at once.[4] I had kept my early poems (including *Prufrock* and others eventually published) in my desk from 1911 to 1915 – with the exception of a period when Conrad Aiken endeavoured, without success, to peddle them for me in London. In 1915 (and through Aiken) I met Pound. The result was that "Prufrock" appeared in *Poetry* in the summer of that year; and through Pound's efforts, my first volume was published by the Egoist Press in 1917.[5]

Pound was then living in a small, dark flat in Kensington. In the largest room he cooked, by artificial light; in the lightest, but smallest room, which was inconveniently triangular, he did his work and received his visitors. There he lived until he moved, in 1922 I think, to Paris: but he seemed always to be only a temporary squatter.[6] This appearance was due, not only to his restless energy – in which it was difficult to distinguish the energy from the restlessness and the fidgets, so that every room, even a big one, seemed too small for him – but to a kind of resistance to growing into any environment. In America, he would no doubt have always seemed on the point of going abroad; in London, he always seemed on the point of crossing the Channel. I have never known a man, of any nationality, to live so long out of his native country without settling[7†] anywhere else. For a time, London, and then Paris, seemed to him the best centre for his attempts to revitalise poetry. But though young English writers, and young writers of any nationality, could count on his support if they excited his interest, the future of American letters was what concerned him most.

No one could have been kinder to younger men, or to writers who, whether younger or not, seemed to him worthy and unrecognised. No poet, furthermore, was, without self-depreciation, more unassuming about his own achievement in poetry. The arrogance which some people have found in him, is really something else; and whatever it is, it has not expressed itself in an undue emphasis on the value of his own poems. He liked to be the impresario for younger men, as well as the animator of artistic activity in any milieu in which he found himself. In this role he would go to any lengths of generosity and kindness; from inviting constantly to dinner a struggling author whom he suspected of being under-fed, or giving away clothing (though his shoes and underwear were almost the only garments which resembled those of other men sufficiently to be worn by them), to trying to find jobs, collect subsidies, get work published and then get it criticised and praised. Indeed, he was ready to lay out the whole of life for anyone in whose work he was interested – a degree of direction which not all the beneficiaries deserved, and which was sometimes embarrassing. Yet, though the object of his beneficence might come to chafe against it, only a man of the meanest spirit could have come to resent it. He was so passionately concerned about the works of art which he expected his protégés to produce, that he sometimes tended to regard the latter almost impersonally, as art or literature machines to be carefully tended and oiled, for the sake of their potential output.

Pound was, in fact, a dominating director. He has always had a passion to teach. In some ways, I can think of no one whom he resembled more than Irving Babbitt – a comparison which neither man would have relished. Perhaps the backgrounds were not unlike; perhaps if Pound had stopped at home, and become, as he might have become, a professor of comparative literature, the resemblance might have been closer still. Babbitt had been my teacher: and by "teacher" I do not mean merely a tutor, or a man whose lectures I attended, but a man who directed my interests, at a particular moment, in such a way that the marks of that direction are still evident. Babbitt's closest friend was Paul More: many years later, More became my friend also. But, once having been a pupil of Babbitt, one did not later become his "friend" in quite that sense; one retained, certainly, not only admiration but warm affection – the affection of the ex-disciple. For when one had come to hold a conviction, religious, social or political, contrary to one of Babbitt's, the status of ex-disciple was the highest to which one could aspire. Some men are so devoted to ideas, that they cannot engage in profitable discussion with those whose ideas differ from their own.

I do not know how good a judge of men Babbitt may have been: when I was his pupil I was too immature to know. But I suspect that he was more inclined to judge men by the ideas they held, than to judge ideas by his understanding of the men who held them. This difference distinguishes two types of intelligence. Pound was always a masterly judge of poetry; a more fallible judge, I think, of men; and he was not at all interested in those who did not strike him as eligible for the ideal intellectual and artistic milieu which he was always trying to find or to found. I think also that sometimes he not only judged too favourably those who shared his views, but was deceived, in judging men by the ideas which they professed to share with him, rather than by appreciation of their personality and character.

I have been writing mainly in the past tense; for I have been writing of a particular period, that between 1910 and 1922 – or, with reference to myself, between 1915 and 1922. (It was in 1922 that I placed before him in Paris the manuscript of a sprawling chaotic poem called *The Waste Land* which left his hands, reduced to about half its size, in the form in which it appears in print. I should like to think that the manuscript, with the suppressed passages, had disappeared irrecoverably: yet, on the other hand, I should wish the blue pencilling on it to be preserved as irrefutable evidence of Pound's critical genius.[8]) This is the period which ended with *Mauberley* and *Propertius* and the first drafts of the early *Cantos*.[9] It is also the period in which he exercised a vital influence upon English and American poetry, although his influence has been largely felt by a younger generation, many of whom never knew him personally, and some of whom may be unaware of the extent of the influence upon them. I am not in this statement taking account of "imagism." Whether the name and principles[10†] of imagism were Pound's invention or Hulme's, I do not know, and I am not very much interested. Imagism produced a few good poems – notably those of H.D. – but it was quickly absorbed into more comprehensive influences, including Pound's. Then, with the *Catholic Anthology*, *The Egoist*, *The Little Review*, Pound accomplished more than any other man could have done with anthologies and periodicals of such limited circulation. (To Pound, and to Miss Weaver, we owe the publication of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* and Lewis's *Tarr*.[11]) Pound did not create the poets: but he created a situation in which, for the first time, there was a "modern movement in poetry" in which English and American poets collaborated, knew each other's works, and influenced each other. Who, I wonder, in England (to say nothing of the rest of Europe) has read any American poetry written between Whitman and Robert Frost? If it had not been for the work that Pound did in the years of which I have been talking, the isolation of American poetry, and the isolation of individual American poets might have continued for a long time. I am not forgetting Miss Lowell, but it seems to me that the work she did, in putting over American poetry upon an American public, was on a lower level. She was a kind of demon saleswoman; and unless my memory of her methods is at fault (for it is a great many years since I read her *Six American Poets*) they were more enthusiastic than critical.[12] If today it is a matter of course that London should take an interest in poetry published in New York and that New York should be interested in poetry published in London – not simply in the decorated reputations, but in the new verse – this is largely due to what Pound achieved for poetry in a decade.

I cannot say what Pound's critical writing will mean to those who have not known the man, because to me it is inextricably woven with his conversation. I still consider it to be almost the only contemporary writing on the Art of Poetry that a young poet can study with profit. It forms a corpus of poetic doctrine: it has thus a particular relation to poetry in a particular age; and it is moreover addressed primarily to the poet. The opinion has been voiced, that Pound's eventual reputation will rest upon his criticism and not upon his poetry. (I have been paid the same compliment myself.) I disagree. It is on his total work for literature that he must be judged: on his poetry, *and* his criticism, *and* his influence on men and on events at a turning point in literature. In any case, his criticism takes its significance from the fact that it is the writing of a poet about poetry; it must be read in the light of his own poetry, as well as of poetry by other men whom he championed. Criticism like Pound's is advocacy for a certain kind of poetry; it is an assertion that poetry written in the immediate future must, if it is to be good poetry, observe certain methods and take certain directions. The important question is, whether the critic is right in his judgment of the situation: if so, his criticism will be permanent, as Dryden's and Wordsworth's are. Only, it will have to be read, in the more distant future, with an understanding of the situation for which the critic wrote. You cannot wholly understand Aristotle's doctrine of tragedy without reference to the remains of the Attic drama upon which Aristotle's generalisations are founded. To readers in the future who do not trouble to put Pound's criticism in its proper setting, as to many contemporary readers to whom "literary criticism" means something quite different from the notes of a poet on his craft, Pound will seem irritatingly biassed. Such readers will be annoyed, as some have already been annoyed, by his irreverence for reputations which they have been educated to regard as above dispute, and by his affirmation of the importance of writers whom they have never read. To those, however, who appreciate the necessity of some abrupt mutation of poetic form and idiom in the period of which I have been speaking, and who concede that Pound not only grasped the situation but saw the direction which poetry ought to take, these exaggerations and depreciations will appear in their proper setting, and find their justification.

On the whole, I prefer the collected papers as one finds them in the two volumes published in New York, to the later book, *Make It New*, published in London.[13] For me, at least, the former volumes recall the first appearance of several items, in periodicals, and so have a savour of their original timeliness which they cannot have for those who know only the collected criticism. Of the essays in *Make It New*, the essay (which is also a small anthology) on "French Poets" of the Symbolist Movement does not wear so well as some of the others.[14] Certainly, a different approach would be appropriate now; some of the poets included may now be ignored; Mallarmé is not discussed; and Valéry's finest work was not known. The essay reads like the report of a tourist in French poetry, rather than like the conclusions of a reader who has digested the matter slowly and over a long period of time. The essay on Henry James remains of value, though the study of the subject has now reached a different phase. On the other hand, Remy de Gourmont does not now appear to have the importance which Pound attributes to him.[15] The observations on the troubadours, on Arnaut Daniel, and on the Elizabethan and other early translators, are as good as they ever were.[16] And the short papers at the beginning and end, "Date Line" and "A Stray Document," are just as necessary for the beginner in the art of verse as they were when they were written.[17] The most important principle of Pound's criticism is contained in the following paragraphs:

> Theoretically [criticism] tries to forerun composition, to serve as gun-sight, though there is, I believe, no recorded instance of this foresight having EVER been of the slightest use save to actual composers. I mean the man who formulates any forward reach of co-ordinating principle is the man who produces the demonstration.
>
> The others who use the principle learn usually from the example, and in most cases merely dim and dilute it.
>
> I think it will usually be found that the work outruns the formulated or at any rate the published equation, or at most they proceed as two feet of one biped. [5]

"A Stray Document" is advice to poets. I had not read it for a long time; and in re-reading it for my present purpose, I found that some of the advice in it is substantially advice that I must have given to many young poets.[18†] For instance:

> Let the candidate fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement; e.g., Saxon charms, Hebridean Folk Songs, the verse of Dante, and the lyrics of Shakespeare – if he can dissociate the vocabulary from the cadence. Let him dissect the lyrics of Goethe coldly into their component sound values, syllables long and short, stressed and unstressed, into vowels and consonants. [338]

The only qualification this precept needs is the warning that one is not likely to get a full appreciation of the way poetry in a foreign language should sound, until one knows that language very well indeed – at which stage the danger arises that the meaning of the words will divert attention. But the advice is nevertheless valuable: for instance, I myself have got a good deal of stimulation from Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*, a collection of Highland folk poetry.[19]

As for the errors against which Pound warns the beginner, I find them turning up, week after week, in verse submitted for my opinion.

> Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it. [338]

The weakness of the greater amount of verse I have to read – apart from that class, abundantly represented, in which the authors do not appear to have read any poetry – is that the authors have indeed been influenced, but not by enough, or by enough variety, of first-rate poetry. Often they appear to have read the shorter poems of Donne, several pieces by Gerard Hopkins, and some of the work of their own elder contemporaries. Some poems submitted suggest that the author has opened a volume of Whitman and noted how the lines look on the printed page. What most of the "free verse" derives from (except from the rumour that verse has been liberated) I cannot tell.

Half of the work that Pound did as a critic can be known only from the testimony of those who have benefited from his conversation or correspondence. At a certain moment, my debt to him was for his advice to read Gautier's *Émaux et Camées*, to which I had not before paid any close attention.[20] I have already spoken of his operation upon *The Waste Land*. I have sometimes tried to perform the same sort of maieutic task;[21] and I know that one of the temptations against which I have to be on guard, is trying to re-write somebody's poem in the way in which I should have written it myself if I had wanted to write that poem. Pound never did that: he tried first to understand what one was attempting to do, and then tried to help one do it in one's way.[22†] There did come a point, of course, at which difference of outlook and belief became too wide; or it may have been distance and different environment; or it may have been both.

I have already said that Pound's criticism would not have the great value it has, without his poetry; and in his poetry there is, for the analytical reader, a great deal of criticism exemplified. I find nothing to alter in my introduction to a volume of Pound's *Selected Poems*, published in London in 1928, except that I should now speak more respectfully of Whitman – a matter irrelevant to my present theme.[23] In that introduction I said nothing about the *Propertius*, which I rate very high indeed. (I am aware of the censure of those who have treated it as a translation; and if it is treated as a translation, they are of course right.) If I am doubtful about some of *The Cantos*, it is not that I find any poetic decline in them. I am doubtful on somewhat the same ground as that on which I once complained to him about an article on the monetary theory of Gesell, which he had written at my suggestion for *The Criterion*.[24] I said (as nearly as I can remember): "I asked you to write an article which would explain this subject to people who had never heard of it; yet you write as if your readers knew about it already, but had failed to understand it."[25] In *The Cantos* there is an increasing defect of communication, not apparent when he is concerned with Sigismondo Malatesta, or with Chinese dynasties, but, for instance, whenever he mentions Martin Van Buren.[26] Such passages are very opaque: they read as if the author was so irritated with his readers for not knowing all about anybody so important as Van Buren, that he refused to enlighten them. I am incidentally annoyed, myself, by occasional use of the peculiar orthography which characterises Pound's correspondence, and by lines written in what he supposes to be a Yankee dialect. But the craftsman up to this moment – and I have in mind certain recent and unpublished Cantos[27] – has never failed. There is nobody living who can write like this: how many can be named, who can write half so well?

I have before now expressed the opinion, that the "greatness" of a poet is not a question for critics of his own age to raise: it is only after he has been dead for a couple of generations that the term begins to have meaning. "Greatness," when the term means anything at all, is an attribute conferred by time. The question of "genuineness" is the first question for contemporary criticism to raise. But there is a third aspect, under which it is proper to consider a poet, a third kind of judgment which may be passed upon him in his later years, the material for which is not only his poetry, but the principles of writing which he has exemplified and defended. I avoid the word *influence*, for there are dangers in estimating a poet by his influence. It takes at least two to make an influence: the man who exerts it and the man who experiences it. The latter may be a writer whose verse would have been bad, whatever influences had gone to form it; or he may have been influenced in the wrong way, or by the wrong things in the work of the poet under whose influence he has come; or he may be born into a period less favourable to the creation of art – though this is a subject we cannot know very much about. So I am not speaking of influence, but of the things for which a man like Pound has stood, in his own time. To appreciate these, we need first, as I suggested at the beginning, some understanding of the state of poetry when the poet began writing. And that is soon forgotten, for each generation tends to accept the situation it finds, as if that situation had always prevailed. I think that Pound was original in insisting that poetry was an art, an art which demands the most arduous application and study; and in seeing that in our time it had to be a highly conscious art. He also saw that a poet who knows only the poetry of his own language is as poorly equipped as the painter or musician who knows only the painting or the music of his own country. The business of the poet is to be more conscious of his own language than other men, to be more sensitive to the feeling, more aware of the meaning of every word he uses, more aware of the history of the language and of every word he uses, than other men. He needs, however, to know as much as he can of several other languages: because one advantage of a knowledge of other languages is that it makes us understand our own language better. Pound's "erudition" has been both exaggerated and irrelevantly under-estimated: for it has been judged chiefly by scholars who did not understand poetry, and by poets who had little scholarship. Pound's great contribution to the work of other poets (if they choose to accept what he offers) is his insistence upon the immensity of the amount of *conscious* labour to be performed by the poet; and his invaluable suggestions for the kind of training the poet should give himself – study of form, metric and vocabulary in the poetry of divers literatures, and study of good prose. Poets should continue to study – and if poetry survives they no doubt will – Pound's poetry, which bridges the gap separating Browning and Swinburne from the present day, and his writings about poetry. He also provides an example of devotion to "the art of poetry" which I can only parallel in our time by the example of Valéry, and to some extent that of Yeats: and to mention these names is to give some impression of Pound's importance as an exponent of the art of poetry in a time when

> The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
> Made with no loss of time,
> A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
> Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.[28]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *Ezra Pound: A Collection of Essays to Be Presented to Ezra Pound on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (London: Peter Nevill, 1950), 25-36. Originally published in *Poetry*, 68 (Sept 1946), 326-38, and reprinted, with revisions, in the *NEW* of 31 Oct (27-28) and 7 Nov 1946 (37-39). The 1950 republication uses the text from the *NEW* with a few further revisions. Significant alterations are recorded in the textual notes. For TSE's 1950 postscript, see the textual note.

Poetry wired TSE in early Apr to request an article for a feature on Pound. He wrote Enid Faber on 15 Apr: "I have been having to work against time to produce (what was very difficult) an article about Ezra Pound which *Poetry* Chicago wanted by May 1st: and obviously, in the circumstances, this had to take precedence of everything beyond the daily routine. Now that is done (as well as I could)." His contribution appeared in the Sept issue alongside a substantial excerpt from *Canto LXXX* and articles by R. P. Blackmur, J. V. Healy, and editor George Dillon.

The 1950 festschrift in which TSE's essay was reprinted was edited by the English poet Peter Russell, who was active in promoting Pound's work in London, and whom TSE described to Ann Ridler on 25 May 1950 as a "very meritorious young man" with both "energy and taste." Nevertheless, TSE declined to urge publication of the "Ezra Pound birthday volume" on his colleagues at Faber; as he told Russell on 14 Mar 1949, his "first interest" was "to see that books of Pound which went out of print during the war [were] republished."

2. TSE attended the first performance of "At the Hawk's Well" in Lady Cunard's home in Cavendish Square on 2 Apr 1916; Michio Ito (1892-1961) danced the part of the Guardian of the Well. The play, Yeats wrote, was staged "in a friend's drawing room, and only those who cared for poetry were invited. It was played upon the floor, and the players came in by the same door as the audience, and the audience and the players and I myself were pleased" (*Four Plays for Dancers* [New York: Macmillan, 1921], 87).

3. Poe and Whitman were both influential figures for the French Symbolist poets – Poe especially for Baudelaire and Mallarmé, Whitman for Laforgue. TSE describes Swinburne's verse in "Swinburne as Poet" as characterized by an intense focus on the sounds and resonances ("vague associations") of words to the exclusion of objects (2.183).

4. In early 1946, Pound's fate was still unclear. Charged with treason for his wartime broadcasts on Rome Radio, he had been repatriated and arraigned in Nov 1945. In Feb 1946 he was declared unfit to stand trial and confined indefinitely at St. Elizabeths Hospital; however, the prospect of a criminal trial continued to loom if at any time he was found to have recovered sufficiently. TSE told to Allen Tate on 4 Apr, as he began work on his article, that it would best be "confined to a statement of [Pound's] contribution to letters," bypassing more politically sensitive subjects.

5. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" appeared in the June 1915 issue of *Poetry*; *Prufrock and Other Observations* was published by the Egoist Press in June 1917.

6. Pound moved to Paris in 1921, and to Rapallo, Italy, in 1924.

7†. In *Poetry*: "seeming to settle"

8. The manuscript, which TSE had given to his patron and advocate John Quinn, was rediscovered among Quinn's papers in the early 1950s, sold to the New York Public Library in 1958, and published in 1971.

9. Pound published the three "Ur-Cantos" – his first approach to the *Cantos* – in 1917, *Homage to Sextus Propertius* in 1919, and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* in 1920.

10†. In *Poetry*: "the principles"

11. *Catholic Anthology* (1915), edited by Pound, included five poems by TSE and work by Yeats, Pound, William Carlos Williams, and others. Harriet Shaw Weaver (1876-1961) edited and financed the *Egoist*, with TSE as assistant editor and contributor from June 1917 until the journal folded late in 1919; in 1932 he dedicated his *Selected Essays* to Weaver (4.497). TSE also

contributed to the *Little Review*, an American literary magazine edited by Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, which survived from 1914 to 1929; it too was an outlet for modernists "discovered" or aided by Pound.

12. Lowell's vigorous promotion of Imagism helped establish the popularity of free verse in the United States. TSE presumably has in mind her *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), though he conflates the title with her *Six French Poets* (1915). He reviewed *Tendencies* – which focuses on Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, H.D., and John Gould Fletcher – unfavorably in 1918, objecting to its "provincial" "all-American propaganda" and referring to its subjects as "the six victims of Miss Lowell's enthusiasm" (1.696-97).

13. *Pavannes and Divisions* (1918) and *Instigations* (1920) were published by the New York–based publishers Knopf and Boni & Liveright; *Make It New: Essays by Ezra Pound* (1934) was published in London by Faber & Faber.

14. The "French Poets" section of *Make It New* combines four of Pound's 1918 essays from the *Little Review*: "A Study of Modern French Poets," "Unanisme," "De Bosschere's Study of Elskamp," and "Albert Mockel and *La Wallonie*."

15. "Henry James" (1918); "De Gourmont: A Distinction" (1919), with "A Letter from Remy de Gourmont" (1917) appended. Pound writes of Gourmont: "He was a great man of letters, a great artist in portrayal. . . . Gourmont prepared our era" (*Make It New*, 308-09).

16. "Troubadours – Their Sorts and Conditions" (1913); "Arnaud Daniel" (1920); "Notes on Elizabethan Classicists" (1917-18); "Translators of Greek: Early Translators of Homer" (1918-20).

17. "Date Line" (1934) is an introductory essay written for *Make It New*; "A Stray Document" reproduces, with brief commentary, Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" (1913).

18†. In *Poetry*: "is advice that I must have given since to many young poets."

19. In his unpublished 1941 Moot paper "Revival of Christian Imagination," TSE calls *Carmina Gadelica* (1900), edited by the folklorist Alexander Carmichael (1832-1912), a "remarkable repository" (6.241).

20. As Pound wrote in "Harold Monro," *Criterion*, 11 (1932): "[A]t a particular date in a particular room, two authors, neither engaged in picking the other's pocket, decided that the dilutation [sic] of *vers libre*, Amygism, Lee Masterism, general floppiness had gone too far and that some counter-current must be set going. . . . Remedy prescribed *Émaux et Camées* (or the Bay State Hymn Book). Rhyme and regular strophes" (590). This moment of collaboration resulted in the quatrains of TSE's *Poems* (1920) and Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920).

21. maieutic (OED): "Relating to or designating the Socratic process, or other similar method, of assisting a person to become fully conscious of ideas previously latent in the mind."

22†. In *Poetry*: "one's own way."

23. In his introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems*, TSE dissociates Pound's innovations from Whitman's, commenting: "Now Pound's originality is genuine in that his versification is a *logical* development of the verse of his English predecessors. Whitman's originality is both genuine and spurious. It is genuine in so far as it is a *logical* development of certain English prose; Whitman was a great prose writer. It is spurious in so far as Whitman wrote in a way that asserted that his great prose was a new form of verse. (And I am ignoring in this connexion the large part of clap-trap in Whitman's content)" (3.519-20).

24. Silvio Gesell (1862-1930), German businessman and economist. Pound's "The Individual in His Milieu: A Study of Relations and Gesell" appeared in the Oct 1935 issue of the *Criterion*.

25. TSE wrote in a similar vein about Pound to Edward Storer on 10 Dec 1941: "One of his peculiarities is an inability to explain anything to anybody. In attempting to explain, he always assumed that the reader knows about it already."

26. The Italian nobleman, soldier, and patron of the arts Sigismondo Malatesta (1417-68), a prominent figure in Pound's epic, is the main subject of *Cantos* VIII-XI; Chinese history, also a recurring topic, is the particular concern of *Cantos* LII-LXI. Martin Van Buren (1782-1862), the eighth president of the United States, figures significantly in *Cantos* XXXVII and LXXVIII (as well as the later *Canto* C); Pound drew on Van Buren's autobiography in writing about the 1829-36 controversy over the Second Bank of the United States. TSE alludes several times in his letters to Pound's opacity on this subject, writing, for example, to Harriet Monroe on 19 Apr 1934: "I have since read the Canto about Van Buren [XXXVII], or about the politics of that party in *Poetry*, and as I know very little about the period and still less about the party from Pound's point of view, I found that it conveyed almost nothing to me."

27. I.e., the *Pisan Cantos*, whose publication by Faber TSE worked throughout 1946 and 1947 to coordinate with James Laughlin of New Directions, Pound's publisher in New York. When he wrote the present essay, TSE had seen these poems, but, as his 1950 postscript (below) indicates, he "had not yet had the opportunity to study" them. Written in 1945 during Pound's incarceration near Pisa, they appeared in 1948 as Cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV.

28. Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, II, lines 9-12.

TEXTUAL NOTE

In the 1950 republication of this essay, TSE added the following postscript:

> To this article there is nothing that I should at present wish to add, unless I were to engage upon a deeper and more analytical examination of Pound's poetry; and that would be a different essay. On one point I should like to qualify my opinion. The foregoing was written shortly after the end of the War, when I had not yet had the opportunity to study *The Pisan Cantos*; and these *Cantos* – apart from their immense weight and solidity in themselves – do I find go far towards justifying the *longueurs* of earlier passages about mysteries of American history, in the first half of the last century, in which I, like most readers, am not adept. Nor would I now complain, re-reading all of the existing *Cantos* continuously, of obscurities which irritated me in reading sections of the poem, at wide intervals, in the form of a serial. Such a change of view, of course, is merely a question of habitation and gradual adaptation. How very straightforward, lucid and orderly we now find *Ulysses* to be!

longueurs: long and tedious passages

Individualists in Verse

To the Editor of *The New English Weekly*

The New English Weekly, 30 (14 Nov 1946) 52

Sir, – Our attention has been called to the letter from Mr. Owen Barfield, under the heading above, in your issue of November 7.[1]

We desire to state that Miss Sackville-West asked the permission of the publishers and the author for the use of these lines from *The Waste Land* in this way, adding that her comment was likely to be unfavourable.[2] While publishers ask no fee for the use of such a short quotation (except where it is to be used as advertising matter) they always appreciate the courtesy of the request.

While expressing no opinion upon the justice of Miss Sackville-West's censure, we wish to say that from the publishers' point of view the lines quoted by Mr. Barfield must be regarded as legitimate criticism and useful publicity.

For Faber and Faber, Ltd.,
T. S. ELIOT,
Director.

NOTES

1. The English philosopher and critic Owen Barfield (1898-1997) contributed to the *Criterion* and maintained cordial relations with TSE, though he was more closely associated with C. S. Lewis and his circle at Oxford. In his letter, Barfield was responding to "Individualists in Verse," a review by Hermann Peschmann in part of Vita Sackville-West's *The Garden* (1946). Published 31 Oct 1946 in the *NEW*, Peschmann's review praised Sackville-West on the whole but criticized her poem "Spring," which quotes the first four lines of *The Waste Land* and comments, "Would that my pen like a blue bayonet / Might skewer all such cat's-meat of defeat." To Peschmann, this moment represented "a serious lapse at once in both art and good taste" (30).

Barfield objected to both Peschmann and an unsigned review in *The Listener*, 36 (12 Sept 1946), which found a "supererogatory discourtesy" in Sackville-West's treatment of TSE in the same lines (353-54). In the *NEW* of 7 Nov 1946, Barfield accused both reviewers of excessive delicacy: "[I]f – even behind the gauze veil of metre and metaphor – there are to be no more hard blows dealt and received in good part, with an occasional bloody coxcomb to boot, the prospect for the future of letters is a dim one" (40).

2. Victoria Mary (Vita) Sackville-West (1892-1962), English writer and horticulturalist. TSE described her to Eleanor Hinkley on 8 June 1931 as "a very charming person, with almost the most beautiful voice I have ever heard" (*L5* 584).

The Significance of Charles Williams[1]

The Listener, 36 (19 Dec 1946) 894-95

Charles Williams, the writer, died a year ago this summer.[2] It is very difficult to give a total impression of his varied work in the time at my disposal. If you look in *Who's Who*, you will find that he was born in 1886, educated at St. Albans and at the University of London, that he was made an honorary M.A. of Oxford, and that he wrote books of several kinds.[3] There is poetry, drama, literary criticism, historical biography, religious and theological writing, and a whole series of novels. A considerable output for a man who died at fifty-nine. What you will not find in *Who's Who* is that Williams, for most of his life, was on the staff of a great publishing house, or that he took evening classes in English literature.[4] This is to tell you that Williams's books, numerous as they are, were the product of a far from ample spare time. Some of his books were frankly pot-boilers; most of his plays and masques were written in response to some special request. For these reasons, very little of his work is quite perfect as literature: it is the whole work, not any one or several masterpieces, that we have to take into account in estimating the importance of the man. I think he was a man of unusual genius, and I regard his work as important. But it has importance of a kind not easy to explain.

I shall first try to give some account of his different kinds of work, as a guide to new readers; and then try to explain what it is, pervading his work in nearly every kind, that I find so remarkable. I shall say nothing about such books as his life of Henry VII or his life of James I; for these books, though very competent and readable, do not give us much clue to the man.[5] And I should not advise a new reader to start with his poetry. Out of his early, and rather conventional style, he developed an original, more modern idiom. But his later and best poems are not easy reading. He could and did write clearly and simply: but in these poems he expects a good deal of the reader. Not many of us know intimately the legends of King Arthur, which always fascinated him, on which they are based. His long poem *Taliessen in Logres* is absorbing after we have got the hang of what he is after.[6] But we shall do better to read some of his novels, his criticism, and his religious writing first. His literary criticism is valuable for its own sake, and helps us with his other work. I think the essay on Milton, which introduces a volume in the World's Classics series, quite essential reading for the understanding of Milton.[7] His *Figure of Beatrice*, a study of Dante and the Divine Comedy, is at once a good introduction to Dante and to the thought of Charles Williams.[8] Then there are the more directly religious writings: one small book, *He Came Down from Heaven*, is an admirable, lucid exposition of that statement in the Creed.[9] A larger book, *The Descent of the Dove*, is no less than an account of the operation of the Holy Ghost in history – and one of the most interesting and readable books on any theological subject that I have ever read.[10]

Then I come to his novels. I speak of his novels especially, because I think they are the best part of his work for a beginner to read, and because there are no novels anywhere quite like them. They are, in a sense, popular novels: they are supernatural thrillers. In the first place, they are very good thrillers. They are exciting. In the second place, they are the work of a man who was a convinced and orthodox Christian, and of one who had something very serious to convey. What Williams has to give is no mere moral teaching, no mere theory of doctrine. It is a work of imagination, based upon real *experience* of the supernatural world, of a supernatural world which is just as natural to the author as our everyday world. And he makes our everyday world very much more exciting, because of the supernatural which he finds always active in it. He really believes in what he is talking about. And seeing all persons and events in the light of the divine, he shows us a significance, in human beings, human emotions, human events, to which we had been blind.

These novels – there are seven of them – are not all equally good. On the other hand, there is no deterioration: he was just luckier with some stories than others. I think one should read them all, and, if possible, in the order in which they were written. Fortunately, the first is also one of the best: *War in Heaven*.[11] It is the story of what happened when the Holy Grail, the famous cup in which Joseph of Arimathea is reputed to have taken some of the blood of Our Lord when on the Cross, turns up in modern England;[12] and of the struggle for its possession, in which supernatural powers, both good and evil, join. The nearest comparison I can make to these stories of Williams's, is Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*.[13] I admire that story very much: but I think it is Chesterton who suffers by the comparison. Williams has not Chesterton's gift for humour and paradox. But, on the other hand, he is not writing his story in order to point a moral; he has no obvious design to instruct and convert the reader. It is rather that he wants to write an exciting mystery story, and knows how to do it: and he writes about good and evil, about the inevitable progress of every human being to heaven or hell, simply because these are the most exciting things to write about that there are.

Those who met Charles Williams would not at first have been impressed by a plain, spectacled man of rather frail physique, who made no attempt to impress anybody. But when he began to speak, they would be struck by several qualities: his liveliness, his intelligence and his amiability. And if they were alert and sensitive, they would begin to notice, behind the intelligence, a kind of extra perceptiveness. Williams had an extended spiritual sense: he was like a man who can notice shades of colour, or hear tones, beyond the ordinary range. Those who could perceive this in him, would also begin to notice that behind the amiability, behind the evident modesty and simplicity, was that much rarer gift – humility. Such humility as, in any company, can charm and put at ease the most exalted, and subdue the most shameless. Among friends, his conversation indulged in wilder flights of fancy: fantastic, amusing and on occasion hilarious. His mind was well stored: his passion for poetry and a retentive memory seemed to make it possible for him to quote, appropriately and at any length, from any part of the masterpieces he loved, such as *Paradise Lost* or Wordsworth's *Prelude*. At ease in human society, I am sure that he would have remained equally composed if a ghost, an angel or an evil spirit had entered the room. He would have known how to receive any kind of supernatural visitor, for he took the other world as simply as this one. If I had ever had to spend a night in a haunted house, I should have felt fearless with Charles Williams in my company.

I have tried to give some impression of the man, as a kind of introduction to his works. The theme of all his novels is the struggle between good and evil. He understood evil, because he understood good; he understood evil, not in spite of, but through, his own innocence and purity. He was not puritanical, because he was not frightened by evil. When you have read some of his thrillers, you will understand better the explanation of *Comus* in his introduction to Milton's poems: Williams was not ashamed to praise that derided virtue, chastity.[14] And you will also appreciate better what Williams found in Dante: his view of Romantic Love, his assurance that love between the sexes, at its best, can be recognised as an obscure revelation of the divine love.

It would be misleading to call Williams a mystic, though he seemed to me to approximate, more nearly than any man I have ever known familiarly, to the saint. If a mystic means a man wholly detached from this world, detached from private affections and public activity, a man wholly dedicated to contemplation, then the term does not fit. But in so far as he was a mystic, he was first and always a Christian mystic. He would, however, have disclaimed the title. As a mystical writer – which is quite a different thing from a writer *about* mysticism – he seems to me unique in this generation, and in an age when the mystical faculty has almost disappeared. He was, as I have said, a man who was always able to live in the material and the spiritual world at once, a man to whom the two worlds were equally real because they are one world. So, while his novels are constantly flashing with religious insight, his religious books communicate a good deal of the excitement of a sensational novel. There are pages in his novels which describe, with extraordinary precision, the kind of unexplainable experience which many of us have had, once or twice in our lives, and been unable to put into words. There are pages which describe, with frightful clarity, the deterioration and damnation of a human soul; and pages which describe the triumphant struggle towards salvation. And in his theological books, on the other hand, ideas and doctrines become as real and as disturbing as motives and causes in a detective story.

There are two reasons why Charles Williams has not yet been fully appreciated. First, as I said at the beginning, hardly any of his work is quite perfect as literary art. Williams was something more uncommon than a literary artist. Second, the capacity for recognising the realities to which Williams was trying to draw our attention, is numbed and almost atrophied in the world in which we live today. If this capacity is latent in you, Williams is the writer to bring it to consciousness. I do not mean simply that Williams was a Christian writer, and that the world has ceased to be Christian. It is not nearly so simple as that. There are many good Christians today who believe in spiritual reality but have no experience of it: their Christianity is rather an aspiration than an awareness. To be brought face to face with what Williams *saw*, is as much the need in our time, for those who call themselves Christians, as it is for everyone else.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Recorded for the series "Books and People," this radio talk was first broadcast by the BBC Pacific Service, 5 Oct 1946, then rebroadcast by the African, North American, General Overseas, and Eastern Services, respectively, over the next four days. "The Writings of Charles Williams," a condensed version of the broadcast, later appeared in *Literary Digest* 3 (1948), 5-8.

2. Williams died 15 May 1945; see TSE's obituary (6.623).

3. The honorary degree was conferred 27 Feb 1943. TSE remarks in his obituary that "no possible distinction could have given [Williams] more pleasure."

4. Williams worked from 1908 to the end of his life at Oxford University Press. Of Williams's evening tutorials, TSE writes in his obituary: "his torrential enthusiasm, his unusual gift for extended quotation, the power and the humility of his personality and his radiation of goodness, both won the hearts of his pupils and inspired in them a love for the literature of which he spoke."

5. *James I* (1934); *Henry VII* (1937).

6. *Taliessen through Logres* (1938), an Arthurian narrative cycle.

7. *The English Poems of John Milton* (1940). In his 1944 lecture notes on Milton, TSE writes: "one of the curious things about the people who have undertaken his defence . . . is that they do not always convince me that they enjoy his poetry. Exception: Mr. Williams" (6.543). TSE would expand on this theme in "Milton II" (1947).

8. *The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante* (1943). TSE negotiated the publication of this book by Faber & Faber.

9. *He Came Down from Heaven* (1938). The title phrase comes from the Nicene Creed – a profession of faith developed at the First Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. and amended at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381 – as translated in the *Book of Common Prayer*: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man."

10. *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church* (1939). TSE reviewed this book in "A Lay Theologian" (5.748).

11. *War in Heaven* (1930).

12. According to the Gospels, Joseph took down Jesus's body from the cross, bound it in a linen shroud, and buried it in the tomb he had prepared for himself. Legend has it that he later brought the Grail to Glastonbury, where he established the first Christian church in Britain.

13. *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908) combines detective fiction and metaphysical elements. In "The Modern Dilemma" (1931), TSE quotes Chesterton's novel: "It is not true that we have never been broken: we have been broken upon the wheel" (4.814).

14. "The mystery which Comus desires to profane," Williams explains, "is the Mystery of Chastity. . . . Comus, by refusing to admit the general principle of things and to be obedient to it, is foolishly and sinfully limiting the nature of Joy. He prefers drunkenness to the taste of wine and promiscuousness to sensitiveness" (x-xi).

Grant Amnesty to All War and Political Prisoners

Catholic Herald (20 Dec 1946) 8

I do not see how any Christian could hesitate to support the appeal for "Christmas Amnesty."[1] It seems to me, however, that we ought to particularise the several classes of unfortunates who might benefit by such an application of Christian principles in public affairs: not in order to make exceptions, but, first, in order to distinguish our direct responsibility, in this country, from our responsibility to express our attitude towards affairs abroad over which we have no control.

Our direct responsibility, of course, is first towards prisoners of war in British hands; and second, towards the populations of enemy territories in British occupation.

Only by setting an example are we in a position to criticise the conduct of our Allies.[2] Our attitude towards the excesses of *épuration* must be qualified by our recognition of the fact that we have been spared the misfortunes of civil dissension and internecine conflict, and consequently spared from experiencing the passions which such division and conflict arouse;[3] and we must distinguish between the effect of these passions, which have not yet cooled, and the cold and deliberate exploitation of these passions for political motives no better, and sometimes worse, than those of such among the victims as are really guilty. The passions themselves we must make every effort to mollify; the exploitation of them we must expose and denounce.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Under the title "Christmas Amnesty," the *Catholic Herald* published a leading article on 20 Dec 1946 urging "a great declaration of amnesty" for prisoners of war and political prisoners (4). Copies of this editorial had been sent to approximately thirty public figures, predominately but not exclusively Roman Catholics. In addition to TSE, seven clergy and eleven laymen contributed endorsements, including Bernard Shaw, Gilbert Murray, Christopher Dawson, Middleton Murry, and two members of parliament.

2. "Christmas Amnesty" observes: "Beyond the iron curtain the numbers of the proscribed, in the overwhelming number of cases without the slightest guilt, must run into millions. But Soviet Russia has deliberately turned its back on the appeal and the teaching of Christmas."

3. *Épuration*: purification. The editorial comments: “It is pitiful to read . . . the daily paragraphs in the French Press under the title ‘Épurations’ about the condemnations to death or prolonged hard labour of little people who, at worst, were the victims of little passions and greeds during a dark time of unparalleled testing.”

PART II

Transcripts and Summary Reports of Lectures

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Culture and Community

The Spur (Wimbledon), 6 (Dec 1942) 19-20[1]

On 29 June 1942 TSE wrote to Mary Trevelyan that he was to have "lunch with the Headmaster of Raynes Park County School." This was John Garrett (1902-66), who established the grammar school for boys in 1935; he was a close friend of W. H. Auden, who wrote the school song and coined its motto, and with whom he published *The Poet's Tongue* (1935), a two-volume anthology of poetry for schools that included three selections by TSE. Garrett also penned fifteen reviews for the *Criterion*. TSE wrote to John Hayward on 19 Sept: "I repair on Tuesday to Raynes Park for the afternoon, there to say goodness knows what (I must now turn to brood on the question) to a select group of boys and masters." A student at the school, Paul Vaughan, later wrote that Garrett's "crowning act of persuasive skill" was securing TSE, "who not only presented the prizes [in June 1942] but then came again on another occasion, to speak to a small group of Sixth Formers" (*Something in Linoleum: A Thirties Education* [Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994], 151). That was the occasion of TSE's address on 22 Sept titled "Community and Culture," reported in the school magazine, *The Spur*, which prefaced the summary report with "Eliot said:"

Poets generally felt that they should be writing for larger audiences than they were, and that raised the question of the meaning of culture. The word could mean good manners, or education and learning, or artistic taste. To be cultured a man must have something of all three. Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* concentrated on what a man could do for himself, and showed no consciousness of sociological culture. It was possible to speak of the culture of one nation as distinct from another because of the work of anthropologists. Primitive societies were often less primitive than they looked, and tampering with one such element of a supposedly primitive community as the convention of head-hunting might lead to quite unexpected results. Everything was more related than was expected. Those responsible for the Empire must have as part of their equipment an intimate knowledge of cultures other than their own. "With the Dominions and the U.S.A., you are dealing with people who are not foreigners, but who are not fellow-countrymen. The Colonial Office has to deal with enabling native peoples to develop along their own traditional lines. How can you help a people to develop a culture which has none? These are fundamental questions for people engaged in Foreign, Colonial and Dominion affairs." At home a people's culture could not be left by Governments to look after itself. Control of town and country planning, of industry and agriculture, was contemplated: culture could be included as well. The poet who consciously wrote for a small group was no poet. The poet had to share a common fundamental culture with the whole people of his country. How much he represented of that culture was more important than by how many he was read. The poet must make conscious the cultural unity of the people. The poet is serving his race by developing its language, and by making it always a better vehicle for the expression of its culture.[2]

NOTES

1. The report is reprinted from the *Spur* in the course of William Baker's "Some T. S. Eliot Inscribed Copies – An Addendum," *Book Collector*, 38 (1989) 253-57; here 256-57. Baker also quotes from the *Spur* of July 1942: "Mr. T. S. Eliot was detained longer in Sweden, on his lecture tour for the British Council, than he anticipated. Characteristically he preferred to postpone his lecture here than give something which he had not thoroughly thought out. This will occasion no surprise to those who remember the wartime charter for education which he gave here in the autumn of 1939. He will lecture on 'Culture and Education' on September 22nd to the old boys and will later give readings of his own poetry to a larger audience" (4).

TSE's previous address at Raynes Park in the autumn of 1939 may have been related to his *NEW* "Commentary" of May 1939 on the *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education*, in which he discusses his personal views of the essential nature and goals of secondary education (5.672).

2. Paul Vaughan continued in his memoir, *Something in Linoleum*: "Afterwards there were questions. Charles Honeker, a timber merchant's son who was one of the intellectual stars of the school, asked the great man what he meant by a certain line in one of the poems. Eliot gave the standard answer: 'It means whatever you want it to mean.' Honeker, blinking nervously: 'I'll tell you what you meant by it' (scandalised giggles). Eliot listened politely to Honeker's exegesis, then gave a long and incomprehensible reply, as though talking to himself" (151).

Walt Whitman and Modern Poetry

TSE's lecture on Whitman, delivered to the Churchill Club in London on 2 Feb 1944, survives only in the form of a transcript made by Donald C. Gallup, the bibliographer, then serving in the United States army. It is prefaced with a warning: "Caveat Lector: Lt. Col. Gallup, who made this transcript at the lecture, desires it to be known that it was made by ear and without the aid of shorthand; and that therefore the phraseology is only approximate and possibly the sense also may have suffered." Gallup was somewhat less diffident about the text in 1985, when he published it in *The Southern Review*: "Although I don't know shorthand, I tried, using occasional abbreviations, to take down every word of the talk. Fortunately, Mr. Eliot spoke, as usual, quite slowly. Although I did later have some difficulty in deciphering my handwriting, I managed to transcribe it and sent a copy to Henry Eliot for the Eliot collection at Harvard. This is what I heard T. S. Eliot say that evening."[1]

The Churchill Club was an intellectual gathering place for American servicemen and servicewomen. As Gallup explains in *The Southern Review*, "Members of the allied forces had the great privilege then of enjoying, three or four evenings each week, the concerts, debates and exhibitions arranged for their benefit in that superlatively handsome building, Ashburnham House, close to Westminster Abbey." TSE's appearance there was facilitated by Lady Jane Clark, the wife of the art historian Kenneth Clark, an acquaintance since the early 1930s. TSE responded stoically to her invitation on 26 Oct 1943: "I had a suspicion which I hope will not be attributed to vanity that sooner or later I should hear something about the Churchill Club but I had no notion whose hand would strike the blow. Of course we have all got to do this if and so far as possible when we are wanted." To her suggestions for possible topics, he replied on 16 Nov, "I am not sure which of those you suggest is best. It is partly a question of which I should have time to prepare. There is something I could say about Walt Whitman but I don't know that it would make me popular with your Churchill Club American intellectuals or improve the surface of Anglo-American relations."

To John Hayward, TSE commented on 3 Feb 1944, the day after delivering his lecture, "I think I was fairly skilful; I didn't want to affront the American Cultural Nationalism (you know, what Van W. Brooks represents, and Sandburg etc.) on this delicate subject directly, so I pointed out the close resemblance between Whitman and Tennyson, and also allowed that Walt was a greater poet than Christopher Smart, whom I don't think they had ever heard of. I feared that there might be a few Professors of American Literature disguised as corporals, but none such revealed themselves."

I can't help reminding you of the occasion on which, during the Lincoln-Douglas campaign for the presidency, Stephen Douglas – well-termed

"The Little Giant" in oratory – had just delivered himself of one of his best speeches. There was a great amount of applause, Lincoln sitting quietly through it. When it had at last subsided, Lincoln got up, removed his coat, rolled up his cuffs, and said, "We will now proceed to stone Stephen."[2]

I relate this anecdote, told me by my father, because it is the first – and probably the last – opportunity I have had of using it.

I added "and modern poetry" to the announcement of this discussion because I was at first diffident about trying to talk about Whitman by himself. When I came to refresh my memory on *Leaves of Grass*, however, I became more interested in Whitman himself and less interested in his relation to modern poetry.

By way of serious explication, I have no special qualifications for discussing Whitman: I can not speak of him as a professor, or as a psychologist, or as a sociologist, nor in the way in which one talks on an author who has had a great influence on one. I never read Whitman properly until I was of an age where I could no longer be influenced by him. A poet must find his own way to say things. Whitman's way is inseparable from what he says.

There are two kinds of free verse (or rather two things which pass under that name): one, verse in which regular and established meters are broken up almost – not quite – out of recognition. The pleasure one gets out of the irregularity of such verse is due to the shadow or suggestion of regular meter behind. Another kind of free verse – rarer and more difficult (in fact, hardly possible, unless one is born to it) – is the verse which has a particular rhythm for that author, with no suggestion of a familiar meter behind it. Whitman's is of this type.

There are two kinds of poet: one, we may call traditional (for lack of a better term) – and I mean by this the man who starts a tradition as much as the man who follows what others have started. This one finds a way of saying which others can follow and adapt for saying what they themselves have to say. It is poets of this type who make the style and idiom of an age. The other kind (as great and greater) find a way of saying hardly adaptable to anything else except what they have to say. Whitman is in this class.

Most poets combine a metric system others can use with a purely personal rhythm, or have the rhythm without a system of meter. The first class are at worst writers of correct verse; the second, not verse, but rather a chopped-up prose. The less successful have tried to do both, with not enough craftsmanship for the first, and no personality for the other.

You cannot imitate Whitman. If you have the same kind of mind, you won't need to. Only if driven to it do you write like him. D. H. Lawrence wrote a kind of free verse, but his poems are more notes for poems than poems themselves. Lawrence did not have the necessity to write in this manner, and so there is no excuse for his having written these poems.

Whitman's poems, from beginning to end, are completed according to his method; they are never merely notes for poems. In either kind, there are many short, few long poems, and there are especially few of Whitman's kind. (I can't speak fairly of the prophetic books of Blake – I find them too dull – and must leave them to people like Foster Damon and Saurat.)[3]

There was one man who had this personal rhythm, though he was not so great a poet – Christopher Smart. But he had to become mad to get it at its best. His poem about his cat is to all other poems about cats what the *Iliad* is to all other poems on war.

When I was young, I thought Whitman's poetry a matter of lines and passages and "O Captain, My Captain!"[4]

Whitman is better than he appears on first acquaintance; at first reading his poems seem to go on and on. When studied and re-read, you do not find that he can be compressed or shortened without mutilation; nor can his verse be made more rhythmical as poetry. It is perfect, although at first it looks far from it. This something is very great and makes Whitman unique in the whole history of literature.

One other point: superficially, in more than one aspect, Whitman is very much like Tennyson. He was the uncrowned laureate for the America of his time as Tennyson was for the England of his time. The two have much in common: Tennyson's beef-eating Englishman and Whitman's Yankee, muscular, hearty, prolific, with beards. (Whitman's affection for beards is quite remarkable to the psychologist.) There is the same surface complacency – the same melancholy, doubt, and blasting attitude toward their day. (Whitman attacks the pernicious habit of New Yorkers of living in boarding houses.) Tennyson never does it so frankly, but still his feeling against contemporary Europe is just as critical. There is in both the same mixture of the masculine and the feminine. In Whitman there is something else under this far more important. He is a greater poet than Tennyson: Tennyson is a great craftsman, but there is something more in Whitman's account of John Paul Jones' seafight in *Song of Myself* – a greater depth and universality – than in Tennyson's "Revenge" or any other of his military and patriotic poems.[5]

Whitman is more like Wordsworth, a poet of a particular intuition which took possession of him. In Whitman, this goes much deeper than mere social or political views. It is a perception, of strange intensity, of a relationship between individuals by which he wanted Society to be governed, and which he spent his life communicating to others. To regard this as satisfactorily explained by any sexual peculiarity is to miss the point. (We do not explain what the eye sees by analyzing the structure of the eye.) I shan't attempt to explain this – any more than Wordsworth's feeling – but it is essential to grasp this to understand the poet.[6]

NOTES

1. "Mr. Eliot at the Churchill Club," *The Southern Review*, 21 (1985), 969-73. The present text is taken from Gallup's five-page transcript in the Houghton (MS Am 1691 [34]) but incorporates minor emendations made here.

2. In 1858 Stephen Douglas, the incumbent Democratic senator from Illinois, engaged in a famous series of debates with his Republican challenger, Abraham Lincoln, largely over the issue of slavery. TSE's anecdote was reported from their second debate, held in Freeport, Illinois, on 27 Aug 1858; different versions have Lincoln either folding up his dustcoat and handing it to one or another nearby citizen with words along the lines of "Now hold my coat while I stone Stephen," or simply announcing to the crowd, "I now propose to stone Stephen." Lincoln's sly reference was to *Acts* 7:54-60, the stoning of Stephen; TSE's, to Stephen Spender, who in introducing him had just, as Gallup notes in his transcript, "remarked in general terms on the importance of Eliot's influence."

3. The American literary scholar S. Foster Damon (1893-1971) was renowned as an expert on Blake. The French scholar Denis Saurat (1890-1958), who spent most of his career in England, published *Blake and Modern Thought* (1929) among other works. Sidney Schiff introduced TSE to Saurat in 1926, and in 1938 TSE saw Saurat's *The End of Fear* through publication at Faber & Faber.

4. "O Captain! My Captain!" (1865), Whitman's response in rhymed verse to the assassination of Lincoln. Gallup notes: "Later, Mr. Eliot called this poem a low point for Whitman, but, unfortunately, of the correct size and shape for makers of anthologies." Whitman himself, "irritated" by its popularity, told a friend, "I'm almost sorry I ever wrote the poem."

5. Section 35 of *Song of Myself* (1855-92) describes the American naval victory in the Battle of Flamborough Head on 23 Sept 1779. Tennyson's poem "The Revenge" (1878) narrates the capture of the English galleon *Revenge* by the Spanish in 1591 at the Battle of Flores.

6. Gallup took notes on the questions and answers that followed TSE's lecture, although he did not attempt "to take them down verbatim." In *The Southern Review*, he gives the following account of the exchange:

> The discussion that followed was by no means confined to Whitman. When one member of the audience asked Mr. Eliot to comment on Ezra Pound's statement that verse tends to atrophy as it departs from music, he replied: "Ezra Pound is a superb literary critic, a very fine prose-writer when he is not taking the trouble to write badly. I do not know enough of

music to be able to speak confidently in these terms. The whole gist of the matter is where it is applied. Pound would not have said that the best work of – for instance – Pope was getting too far from music."

[Stephen] Spender's remark that he had always considered Whitman to be an egoist elicited Eliot's rebuttal: "No, Whitman was not an egoist: he was not urging others to follow him, but rather that they be inspired by the same vision." He admitted later that "the difference between identifying oneself with the world and the world with oneself is very fine indeed."

To the statement that Irving Babbitt found Rousseau under Whitman's bed, Mr. Eliot commented: "Babbitt found Rousseau under every bed. A principle with Babbitt did not need evidence." When the speaker began to explain that "it was a question of sentimentalism," Mr. Eliot interrupted with, "Oh, yes, I know how Babbitt would do it. Babbitt thought I was influenced by Rousseau, but I read Rousseau only because Babbitt told me to do so."

Someone asked whether Mr. Eliot considered that modern art had been received more readily and widely than modern poetry, and he replied: "What we call modern painting started earlier than modern poetry in English did."

To a question about Emily Brontë – whether she was a great prose-writer as well as a great poet – Mr. Eliot replied simply: "I am not sufficiently familiar with her work to be able to say." When someone else asked the same question about Milton, he answered: "No – a great poet but not a great prose-writer. His prose is admired because it is the next best thing to his saying it in poetry" (972).

Helping Children to Know the World[1]

The Times (10 Oct 1944) 2

Mr. T. S. Eliot, president of the British section of Books Across the Sea, speaking at the annual meeting, at the Waldorf Hotel, last night, said that the activities of the organization in the juvenile world in the past year had been conspicuous.[2]

This was a very important part of the work in which they were taking a long view towards the future. People sometimes asked why there should be any new children's books when there were so many established children's classics. But children, as much as anybody else, needed contemporary books as well as classics, and particularly this was so in the case of English and American children reading books from the other country. The early impressions children got of another country were very largely from the books they read for pleasure.[3] The notions that English children formed of the life of American children, and vice versa, were the foundation for the ideas which they would have later. To concern ourselves with children's books, therefore, was simply to plan a long way ahead.

The work of the organization for children was naturally closely associated with work for and through schools and, consequently, for individual teachers. This was a branch of the activity in which he was particularly interested. The most obvious link to be forged was that of the teaching of history and geography.

The two kinds of service of which he had spoken were not only natural but inevitable developments out of what remained the primary purpose of the association to promote better understanding between the English-speaking peoples through books.

The American and British sections together hoped to cooperate in establishing relations with groups of people among our allies and to help these nations which were temporarily famished even of books in their own languages and to establish exchanges.

On view at the meeting was the 2,000th American "ambassador" book received as a gift of good will from the corresponding Books Across the Sea in New York. It is an inscribed copy of Dixon Wecter's *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*.[4]

NOTES

1. The probable author of this report on TSE's 1944 presidential address to Books Across the Sea is Harold Hannyngton Child. A version of the report giving further details about the comments of other speakers at the meeting appeared in the *TLS* of 14 Oct (503). It appears from Child's account that TSE reused parts of his address in both his short essay "Britain and America: Promotion of Mutual Understanding," published 4 Nov in the *TES* (6.547), and his *Bridgebuilders* broadcast of 15 Nov (6.563).

2. On "Books Across the Sea" and TSE's election to the presidency of its London circle, see the headnote to his Aug 1943 message to the membership (6.418).

3. Recalling TSE's lecture in the *TLS* of 11 Nov, Child repeats verbatim two sentences of this summary, adding of TSE parenthetically, "and how many of his assenting hearers felt their hearts leap at the thought of *Uncle Remus* and of *Huckleberry Finn*?" (547).

4. Dixon Wecter (1906-50), American social historian. His *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (1944), a popular history of the experiences of U.S. soldiers returning from war, won the Houghton Mifflin Life-in-America Prize.

Presidential address for Books Across the Sea

The Times (1 Feb 1946) 7; *Books Across the Sea Bulletin* (Feb 1946) 1-2

On 31 Jan 1946 TSE presided over the formal opening of the Books Across the Sea (BAS) Room in the South Audley Street Public Library, where over 2,400 "ambassador-books" on every aspect of American life were to be housed and made available to any member of a public library. The guest of honor was Eleanor Roosevelt, who stated that the book exchange between Britain and America was "a valuable contribution to the aims which the United Nations Organization has set out to achieve." Also present was May Lamberton Becker (1873-1958), chair of BAS in New York, who said she could "testify that every volume on the shelves came across the Atlantic as a goodwill gift from American book-lovers." (Becker, an author and journalist, was also the mother of BAS founder Beatrice Warde.) On 25 Jan TSE wrote to Alicia Street, chair of BAS in London: "In view of the amount there is to report and of wanting to give as much time as possible to Mrs. Becker whom the members will be anxious to hear, I shall speak more briefly than usual, perhaps fifteen minutes."

According to the *Times*, TSE, "who handed the collection over," said: "It is a library of Americana which will be unique in the world; a library of first editions – the librarian's dream. It will be a library of books very few of which will have been published in this country. One must keep in mind a picture of a library exactly corresponding to this in New York of English books which we have been sending over since the organization started."

"Mr. T. S. Eliot," reported the *Books Across the Sea Bulletin*,

> explained the unique value of the Collection and congratulated both the Society and the City of Westminster on the mutual benefits they would derive from the transference of our less-recent books . . . to this Special Room where they would be far more accessible.
>
> "The need for closer reciprocal understanding is greater now than at any period in the past, and the lack of it would be more dangerous for the world. The work of Books Across the Sea has become more important than it was during the war, when the difficulties were merely physical ones caused by the breakdown of communications. The next few years will be crucial, and it is essential to maintain the spirit of co-operation.
>
> "A new field was opening up to Books Across the Sea," the President continued. "Readers on the Continent were famished for books in the

English language. The Brussels exchange was a beginning.[1] The spread of these exchanges would present fascinating problems. Fortunately the Books Across the Sea methods were not cut-and-dried; the approach to each country would be according to its own needs and desires.

"Books Across the Sea had survived the difficulties and dangers of wartime, thanks to the flexibility and informality of its organization. Frequent Council meetings had been out of the question; the only way to get anything done was to place responsibility on individual members. Much voluntary time and skilled assistance had been given by a number of members." The President urged other members to contribute voluntary time; the present volunteers had their hands full, and more helpers were needed to meet the increase of correspondence and activities.

"Books Across the Sea would retain its spirit of informality. No bureaucratic rigidness would leave it lagging behind the needs of the moment. Filling a place for which no other organization existed, it was well prepared to meet new needs and conditions as they arose."

NOTE

1. Alicia Street had reported at the Annual General Meeting on 28 Jan: "Nearly 200 volumes were being dispatched to Brussels as a nucleus gift to the new BAS circle which is forming there. Many publishers had generously spared file-copies of books which were unobtainable owing to the book-shortage and would be invaluable to readers in Belgium as light upon wartime changes in British life."

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PART III

Signed Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship

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The Malvern Conference

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (14 Jan 1941) 5

Sir, – The report which you have published about the results of the Archbishop of York's conference at Malvern states that "a document of conclusions" was adopted unanimously, and that "another document outlining in detail the conclusions of the conference on all aspects of the question debated – doctrinal as well as economic – will be issued later."[1] As members of the conference, we wish to say that neither of these documents was adopted unanimously. The first was more than once put to the vote in confused circumstances, and in the end was only carried *nemine contradicente*;[2] the second, so far as we could discover, was not put to the vote at all, and certainly it would not have been carried unanimously. We would add that in our opinion the way in which the conference was arranged and its proceedings conducted detracts very seriously from any value or authority that might otherwise attach to its conclusions.[3]

Yours faithfully,
T. S. ELIOT, H. A. HODGES,
ALEC R. VIDLER

January 12

NOTES

[1] The report appeared under the heading "Church and Society / Conclusions of Malvern Conference" in the *Times* of 11 Jan 1941 (2). The proceedings of the Archbishop of York's conference at Malvern in Jan 1941 were published as *Malvern, 1941: The Life of the Church and the Order of Society* (London: Longmans, Green, 1942); the volume included TSE's address, "The Christian Conception of Education" (6.246). The conference was convened "to consider how far the Christian faith and principles based upon it afford guidance for action in the world to-day" (vii)

[2] Latin: without dissent. The implication is that those who opposed the document, perceiving that they were in the minority, permitted its approval by general consent; i.e., without a formal vote.

[3] TSE wrote to Philip Mairet on 21 Feb: "Vidler tells me that our letter to the *Times* was taken in some quarters as meaning that we were reactionaries: yet if the only alternative to suffering that injustice is to be a member of the 1941 committee . . ." (TSE's ellipses). He brought up the matter again with Geoffrey Curtis on 14 Mar: "It was partly the unrepresentative character of the conference that distressed us. . . . We believe that quite a small conference was at first intended, and that it grew in a haphazard way by agglomeration." Over 200 clerics and laypersons attended.

Beauty in Trust

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (25 July 1941) 5

Sir, – The gutting of the Temple and Gray's Inn, the massacre of the City churches, are things done, not to be undone:[1] we have been improvident trustees of a beauty that we judged imperishable, it had been so long with us. But there is beauty still, and still unprotected. Flesh and blood can run to shelters, but wood and stone are helpless unless mankind that shaped them will be ingenious to shield them.

Now, while the German bombers are still busy in the East, there is breathing space to plan protection or removal.[2] Already they have covered Goldsmith's grave beside the rubble of the Temple, and there is a committee to save what can be saved of the City Churches (Prebendary Wellard, 15, Chesterford Gardens, N.W.3, is secretary).[3] But do not let us leave everything to the authorities. Every one of us knows some ancient thing that he would not see destroyed, a *cul de sac*, a graveyard, some fragment of old brick or wrought iron. Talk about it; help the neighbour fire-watchers; bring one more bucket of water. It is the duty of those of us who cannot fight for the new world to preserve what we may of the old.

Yours, &c.,
NANCY ASTOR, MAX BEERBOHM,
R. W. CHAMBERS, SYBIL COLEFAX,
T. S. ELIOT, ROSE MACAULAY, CHARLES MORGAN,
DOROTHY SAYERS, M. ST. CLARE BYRNE,
F. A. VOIGHT, HELEN WADDELL

July 21

NOTES

1. The Inns of Court, including the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn, were severely damaged during the Blitz, as were several historic churches in the City; some were destroyed outright.

2. The German invasion of the Soviet Union began on 22 June.

3. Goldsmith is buried at the Temple Church, which was annihilated in a German bombing raid. *The Times* reported on 29 May 1941: "Outside the church, the tomb of Oliver Goldsmith was half buried beneath rubble, and the Latin inscription on his effigy, written by Dr. Johnson,

has been destroyed" (2). The Rev. Prebendary Tom Wellard, rector since 1917 of St. Olave's, Hart Street, was involved for years in the well-being of the City churches. In the aftermath of severe bombing in Dec 1940, the Bishop of London created the Save the Churches Committee and appointed Wellard secretary in Feb 1941. When the rectory of St. Olave's was completely destroyed in April, he took lodgings in Hampstead and served the committee until his death in Nov 1942.

Books in War Time: "Disintegration" of the Trade

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (1 Jan 1942) 5

Sir, – The apathetic disrespect shown by successive Governments towards letters and men of letters has been one of the safeguards of freedom of expression. It is now, in the circumstances of this war, robbing this freedom of any significance.

Unless authority, in the person of the appropriate Ministers, suffers a change of mind, the condition of letters in this country will be quickly past prayer. Any who think that this defeat at home will have no effect on the course of the war do not realize the extent of their folly. In a war of ideas and machines it is folly to let half your line of defence founder from neglect. Our enemy has not made this mistake.

Books – "our best export" (Mr. Brendan Bracken) – and the book trade are not merely another industry.[1] They are the daily food of our mental and spiritual life, and the evidence, to other peoples, that it exists. But unless action is taken and taken soon, to arrest the disintegration of the book trade, the public which is turning more and more to books for the help they give, and the Government Departments (War Office, Air Ministry, Admiralty, Ministry of Information) to which books of various kinds are essential, will ask and get nothing. Let it be noted that the vast bulk of books produced consists of reprints of educational books, technical books, and classics: fiction is an extremely small percentage of the whole.

The steps which it is necessary to take to avert breakdown do not involve any disturbance of the war effort. The present allocation of paper for books represents only 1¼ per cent. of the total consumption. An increase to no more than 1¾ per cent. would suffice. Since less than 50 firms are involved only a few reservations of trained personnel are needed. And for distribution, an extremely small supplementary petrol ration. These facts are amplified in Mr. Stanley Unwin's article in the current *Life and Letters*, which should be read.[2]

If by indifference, if by negligence, these steps are not taken, the loss to the country now is calculable and severe, and to the future incalculable.

"Books in all their variety offer the means whereby civilization may be carried triumphantly forward." The speaker is Winston Churchill.[3]

We are, Sir, yours faithfully,
LAURENCE BINYON, EDMUND BLUNDEN, BONAMY DOBRÉE,
T. S. ELIOT, E. M. FORSTER, PHILIP GUEDALLA,
STORM JAMESON, B. H. LIDDELL HART, WALTER DE LA MARE,
DESMOND MACCARTHY, GILBERT MURRAY, J. B. PRIESTLEY,
ERNEST RHYS, G. BERNARD SHAW, OSBERT SITWELL,
G. M. TREVELYAN, H. G. WELLS, REBECCA WEST

The P.E.N., The Porch, Tring, Herts.[4]
Dec. 30

NOTES

1. The *TLS* reported in "News and Notes" on 25 Oct 1941 that the new Minister of Information, Brendan Bracken (1901-58), had publicly announced at a recent meeting of the National Book Council that "books are our best export. Our best!" (525).

2. Sir Stanley Unwin (1884-1968), British publisher. His "The Status of Books" appeared in *Life and Letters To-day*, 31 (Dec 1941), 160-69; rpt. in *Publishing in Peace and War* (1944).

3. Churchill made this statement on 8 Nov 1937 for the National Book Fair; *read*: "Books, in all their variety, offer the human intellect the means whereby civilisation may be carried triumphantly forward."

4. I.e., the offices of the English PEN [Poets, Essayists, Novelists], the writers' association, in the town of Tring, Hertfordshire. Storm Jameson was president from 1939 to 1944.

Foundational statement of the Joint Standing Committee of Religion and Life and the Sword of the Spirit[1]

(1) We agree that a compelling obligation rests upon all Christian people in this country to maintain the Christian tradition and to act together to the utmost possible extent to secure the effective influence of Christian teaching and witness in the handling of social, economic, and civic problems, now and in the critical post-war period.

We are all profoundly impressed with the increasing danger that in our generation the Christian heritage, in which we all share, may be lost, and that our country may increasingly slip into accepting pagan standards and ideals. Believing, as we do, that the Christian Revelation has an intrinsic claim upon mankind, and that it is also the preserver of human society from excesses and errors, we feel that all Christians are bound in duty and charity alike towards their fellow-countrymen to oppose the present tendencies to set Christianity aside and to treat it as a matter of private concern without relevance to the principles which should guide society.

(2) We agree that there is a large area of common ground on which, without raising ultimate questions of Church order and doctrine which divide us, full coöperation is possible and is already taking place. The Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and the Evangelical Free Churches have already coöperated for some considerable time in the social and international field. There has also been, for more than 20 years, coöperation for limited social purposes with the Roman Catholic Church. But the first clear definition of a large common area is to be found in the Ten Points of *The Times* letter of December 21, 1940, which was signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Cardinal Hinsley, and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council.[2]

The joint declaration in *The Times* letter is a valuable point of departure. But there are many other pronouncements, such as that issued by the Malvern Conference, the document on Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction issued by the Commission of the Churches, the statement on a Christian Realm put out by the Church Union of the Church of

England, the social Encyclicals of the Popes from Leo XIII onwards, and many others, all relevant to the common obligation we accept. Over this whole field collaboration among Christians, already in progress, ought to be encouraged.[3]

(3) We agree that organized Christianity, to fulfill its proper function, must everywhere be secured in certain essential freedoms. Full freedom must mean freedom to worship according to conscience, freedom to preach, teach, educate, and persuade (all in the spirit of Christian charity), and freedom to bring up children in the faith of their parents. The Christian life is one lived in and through membership of a religious society, and its corporate nature and its constitutional freedom and independence must be recognized and guaranteed by the State.

(4) Our purpose is to unite informed and convinced Christians all over the country in common action on broad lines of social and international policy. Already, in different localities, groups have come into being – groups of clergy and ministers, Christian Councils, study groups and the like – including members of all Communions. Among Roman Catholics the work of organization is fulfilled by the Sword of the Spirit, a body with a recognized Constitution and membership. The Commission of the Churches, as a result of the Religion and Life Weeks that it has promoted, is establishing an organization kindred in status, to do, within the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches, what the Sword of the Spirit does inside the Roman Catholic Church, so that individuals, or groups, moved by public meetings or otherwise, can be linked up.

The crisis of civilization, and the possibilities open to Christians in the period of reconstruction in the national and international field, make it essential that all this work of Christian coöperation should be greatly intensified and extended.

(5) The striking thing about the Sword of the Spirit and similar movements is the spontaneity of support which they have received, and the great local enthusiasm which has accompanied public meetings arranged on this wide coöperative basis. Local spontaneity and freedom are of the highest value, and must not be overloaded by central organization. But, in our judgment, there must be a Joint Committee to give advice, direction, and encouragement to all who seek it, and to extend this joint movement to parts of the country it has not yet reached.

Linked by this Committee, the two Movements will work through parallel action in the religious, and joint action in the social and international field.

NOTES

1. As printed in *The Living Church* 104 (7 June 1942), 9; previously reported and quoted from in the *Times* of 29 May under the title "Cooperation among the Churches: Social, Economic, and Civic Questions" (7). The Sword of the Spirit was an antitotalitarian organization intended to unify Roman Catholic support of the British war effort and to promote Christian social values in the conduct of the war and the subsequent peace. Religion and Life was founded in 1941 as a sister organization for Anglicans and Free-Church members after the Roman Catholic hierarchy overruled the Sword's ecumenical intentions.

TSE took part in the meetings, beginning late in 1941, at which this joint statement was forged. The statement was drafted by 24 Jan; it was approved by the executive committee of The Sword of the Spirit on 5 Feb and by the Commission of the Churches on 15 Apr. The resulting Joint Standing Committee met monthly thereafter to coordinate the activities of the two groups. The Anglican representatives apart from TSE were the Bishops of London and Chichester, Eleanora Iredale, and Mary Owen.

The founding statement was read, according to the *Times*, by Geoffrey Fisher (1887-1972), Bishop of London, on 28 May at the Waldorf Hotel, in the company and with the support of William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury; Arthur Cardinal Hinsley (1865-1943), Archbishop of Westminster; and "representatives of the Free Churches."

2. TSE discusses the prelates' letter in "Towards a Christian Britain" (6.164).

3. On the Malvern Conference, in which TSE participated, see "The Christian Conception of Education" (6.254, n.1) and "The Malvern Conference" (6.795). The document by the Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility was published as *Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1941), the statement of the Church Union as *A Christian Realm* (London: Church Union, 1941). TSE cites the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI in "Towards a Christian Britain" (6.164-65).

Scheme for Civic Theatres: Memorandum to the Prime Minister

The Times (18 Nov 1942) 5

Proposals for the development of the theatre on a State-aided basis after the war are set forth in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, the President of the Board of Education, and the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts. The Civic Theatre Scheme, as it is called, has been prepared by a special committee appointed by the British Drama League.[1]

It is suggested that the benefits of the scheme should be available throughout the entire country, and that such financial assistance as may be necessary can be most fairly secured by a combination of local and State subsidy. But any State-supported scheme should aim at ultimate self-support. Participation in the scheme should be open to the larger county boroughs and to such other towns and cities as may rank among the actual or potential cultural centres. London will require special treatment.

A Central Civic Theatre Council, appointed by the Government, is suggested for general supervision of the scheme. Each civic theatre will be housed either in an existing playhouse or in a new building specially provided. In the case of a new building the plans must be approved by the central council and due regard paid to any town-planning scheme. In either case the enterprise must be approved by the central council after which a charitable trust must be established and a committee composed of the local authority and of the voluntary subscribers formed to administer it.

The programme policy should be based on a return to the true "repertory system" as opposed to the "short run system."[2] The repertoire should consist of classical plays, new and original plays, contemporary plays and translations. Under the heading "new and original plays" local playwrights of promise should be given their chance and the emergence of regional schools of dramatic authorship encouraged. The company of players must be of sufficient size for the performance of plays with large casts as well as for the service of adjacent suburbs, small towns, and even the larger villages. This "neighbourhood service" is an integral part of the whole scheme.

It is pointed out that already London is served by a large number of theatres, and not many municipal authorities in the Metropolitan area would probably desire to establish a civic theatre on the scale envisaged. Nearing achievement, however, is the National Theatre, which by reason of its resources, both moral and material, and its potential status as the imperial symbol of British dramatic art, will claim on every ground to participate in and benefit from the scheme.[3] In virtue of its constitution and declared artistic policy, it must clearly be regarded as the model and exemplar of all State-aided theatres.

The memorandum has the support of:

BRITISH ACTORS' EQUITY, THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, LORD ESHER, SIR PERCY HARRIS, MRS. ALFRED LYTTELTON, DAME ELIZABETH CADBURY, SIR BARRY JACKSON, SIR EDWIN LUTYENS, COLONEL SIR JOHN SHUTE, MR. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, MR. JAMES BRIDIE, MR. ASHLEY DUKES, MR. T. S. ELIOT, DR. JULIAN HUXLEY, MR. WILL LAWTHER, MR. KENNETH LINDSAY, MR. DESMOND MACCARTHY, DR. J. J. MALLON, MR. NORMAN MARSHALL, DR. GILBERT MURRAY, MR. J. B. PRIESTLEY, MR. ALEC L. REA, DR. MALCOLM SARGENT, MR. G. BERNARD SHAW, DR. EDITH SUMMERSKILL, AND MR. GEOFFREY WHITWORTH

NOTES

1. See *The Civic Theatre Scheme, as Submitted by The British Drama League to the Prime Minister, the President of the Board of Education and the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts* (London: British Drama League, 1942). This unsigned, eight-page memorandum, dated and submitted to Prime Minister Winston Churchill on 12 Nov, was "drafted by a Special Committee appointed by the Council of the British Drama League at a meeting held on March 3rd, 1942" and "issued with the support and approval" of the 26 signatories below (2). All communication was to be directed to Geoffrey Whitworth (1883-1951), director of the British Drama League. The scheme was influential in the passage of the 1948 Local Government Act, section 132, which gave councils the right to establish and maintain theaters with local and state subsidies. The National Theatre Act followed in 1949.

2. The *Civic Theatre Scheme* advocates "a return to the true 'repertory system' as opposed to the 'short-run system' which most of the so-called 'Repertory Theatres' with resident companies were practising before the war. A weekly change of bill . . . necessitated such hurried productions that a satisfactory standard was seldom achieved." In contrast, the *Scheme* insists that "a repertoire of several productions must be built up, any one of which can be performed as desired. In this way successful and important productions need not be scrapped after seven performances, while an adequate time can be given to the rehearsal of each new play introduced

into the repertoire. Two or three different plays should be given every week, though a nightly change of bill need not be insisted upon" (6-7). This system would later be adopted by the National Theatre in London.

3. Despite this optimistic forecast, Parliament would not pass the National Theatre Act until 1949, and financial concerns would ultimately delay the founding of the National Theatre until 1963.

Mr. Arthur Machen

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (18 February 1943) 5

Sir, – March 3, 1943, will be the eightieth birthday of one of the most distinguished living men of letters, Mr. Arthur Machen.[1] His friends and admirers wish to honour the occasion by a birthday cheque, which will be of practical help to him.[2] Subscriptions should be sent to Colin Summerford, care of Westminster Bank, 1, Stratford Place, W.1, cheques being payable to the "Arthur Machen Fund," and crossed Westminster Bank (Marylebone).[3]

MAX BEERBOHM, EDWARD MARSH,
ALGERNON BLACKWOOD, JOHN MASEFIELD,
WALTER DE LA MARE, A. E. W. MASON,
T. S. ELIOT, ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH,
DESMOND MACCARTHY, MICHAEL SADLEIR,
COMPTON MACKENZIE, G. BERNARD SHAW

February 17

NOTES

1. Arthur Llewelyn Jones Machen (1863-1947), Welsh writer chiefly of fantasy and gothic fiction, including *The Great God Pan* (1890), *The Three Imposters* (1895), and "*The White People*" (1904).

2. The same letter appeared in the *TLS* of 20 Feb (92), *John O'London's Weekly* of 26 Feb (215), the *New Statesman* of 27 Feb (142), *Horizon* of Mar (215), and the *Dublin Magazine* of Apr/June (82). The *South Wales Argus* subsequently joined the fundraiser, sending out a flyer titled "The National Appeal" that quoted from the letter above over a facsimile of the writers' autographs: "Is it not an honour indeed that tribute should be paid to our Monmouthshire author by some of the greatest writers of the day?" The vogue for his writings having passed by the late 1920s, Machen was living in poverty, which this birthday appeal, raising over £2,000, did much to relieve.

3. Colin Summerford (1908-90), English publisher, journalist, and librarian. At age sixteen, he befriended Machen, and he remained close to the older writer for the rest of Machen's life.

An English Tribute

To the Editor of the *Harvard Alumni Magazine*

Harvard Alumni Magazine, 45 (8 May 1943) 543

The undersigned English men of letters, who have had in succession the high privilege of holding the annual professorship at Harvard founded by Mr. Stillman in memory of his great teacher, Charles Eliot Norton, wish to express our sense of personal loss at the death of President Lowell and our admiration for his work and character.[1]

We hesitate to speak of the personal kindness and thoughtful hospitality which we received from him and Mrs. Lowell.[2] Those qualities are only to be expected in America. But we may record our recognition of the simplicity with which he bore his high office and the remarkable combination of scholarship and public spirit with which he seemed to us to discharge its duties. The Presidency of Harvard is a post to which no Vice-Chancellorship of any British University affords a parallel; but those of us who heard the speech of thanks which Lowell delivered on his seventieth birthday, defining the mission of Harvard to the whole American people, will ever remember it and draw guidance from it when endeavouring to serve their own universities.[3] We feel that we have lost a valued friend, and we send our sympathy to the friends of Lowell in America.

GILBERT MURRAY (1926-27), Regius Professor of Greek, Oxford
SIR ERIC MACLAGAN (1927-28), Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Athenaeum, London
H. W. GARROD (1929-30), Fellow of Merton College, Oxford
A. M. HIND (1930-31), Keeper of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, London
T. S. ELIOT (1932-33), London[4]

NOTES

[1] The Charles Eliot Norton Professorship at Harvard was founded in 1925 by the businessman and philanthropist Charles Chauncey Stillman (1877-1926). A. Lawrence Lowell, who served as president of Harvard from 1909 to 1933, died on 6 Jan 1943.

[2] Lowell married Anna Parker (1856-1930) in 1879; she was known for the Sunday teas she held for students and visiting faculty.

3. Lowell's untitled and unpublished speech at a meeting in honor of his seventieth birthday, 13 Dec 1926, is in the Harvard University Archives (UAI 15.896, Box 100). As the Norton Professor at that time, Gilbert Murray likely attended the event.

4. The dates of the Norton Professorship for each signatory are given in parentheses; for TSE's Norton lectures, see *UPUC* (4.574).

Church House, Soho

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (1 Dec 1943) 7

The Bishop of London is warmly supporting an appeal, signed by Lord Halifax, Lady Ravensdale, and Mr. T. S. Eliot, for gifts towards the upkeep of St. Anne's Church House (57a, Dean Street, Soho, W.1), which was opened experimentally last May as a centre of evangelization.[1] Two wardens were appointed, and the expense of essential repairs to the bomb-damaged fabric of the building was incurred in a venture of faith.[2] Now, say the writers, the promoters' faith has been vindicated. The work of the home is well established, the wardens have met a large number of people, and even during the summer a series of evening lectures was well attended.[3] The chapel is available for private prayer at any time, and there is a large clubroom, open daily from noon until 7 p.m.

The house seeks to provide not only facilities for instruction to church people anxious to know more of their faith and its application to life, but also a meeting place for those who wish only to inquire without necessarily committing themselves. It is hoped in time to arrange public discussions between Christians and agnostics in a common search for the truth, but the wardens are prepared not only to instruct but to discuss objections and difficulties. It is felt that with the return of the men and women in the forces the work of the house will be urgently needed.

NOTES

1. *The Times* transformed the letter into a summary report. Since the opening of the church house on 8 May, TSE had served on the governing committee with Lord Halifax and Irene Curzon, 2nd Baroness Ravensdale (1896-1966). On 2 Nov he wrote to John Hayward that he had "to sign a letter . . . about St. Anne's, and another by Masefield, etc. about Laurence Binyon [6.810]; and the *Times* readers will get tired of my signature which will shortly become as valueless as that of the Ap [Archbishop] of Canterbury."

2. The Bishop of London, Geoffrey Fisher, appointed the Rev. Gilbert Shaw and the Rev. Patrick McLaughlin as wardens of the reconstructed Church House, which survived the destruction of St. Anne's Church by bombing on 24 Sept 1940.

3. As a member of the governing committee, TSE organized the summer lecture series and took the chair for the inaugural lecture on 6 May by S. L. Bethell, the Shakespearean scholar. Bethell's *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*, for which TSE wrote the introduction, would be published in 1944 (6.503).

Laurence Binyon

To the Editor of *The Times*[1]

The Times (6 Dec 1943) 5

Sir, – It is six months since Laurence Binyon died.[2] His noble gifts as a poet are widely recognized; one of his poems, "For the Fallen," has become part of our national inheritance.[3] His love for the masters of English water-colour painting, for Turner, Girtin, and Cotman, for Blake and his followers, for the arts of India, China, and Japan, indeed for all work touched with the glow of imagination, has stirred thousands in both hemispheres. Moreover, his own high character, his response to anything he found gallant in life, among young people especially, made his influence one of the most fruitful of our generation.

He himself found the greatest pleasure and enlightenment in visits to other countries, in appreciation of their ways of life and thought as well as of their art, cities, and countryside. Some of the acquaintances thus made ripened into intimate friendships. It is proposed to establish a Binyon bursary at his old university, Oxford, to give, so far as the fund collected will permit, annually, a student (or students) the opportunity, which would not otherwise be available, of a visit abroad, to some land, East or West, to which he may be drawn by interest and sympathy.[4]

Donations for this purpose will be gratefully received by Mr. R. C. Trevelyan, Hon. Treasurer, The Shiffolds, Holmbury St. Mary, Dorking. Cheques should be made payable to the Binyon Memorial fund.

Yours, &c.,

GORDON BOTTOMLEY, ATUL CHATTERJEE, SYDNEY COCKERELL, W. DE LA MARE, T. S. ELIOT, GEORGE HILL, DOUGAL O. MALCOLM, JOHN MASEFIELD, WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN, LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH, GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, R. C. TREVELYAN, ARTHUR WALEY, J. R. H. WEAVER

NOTES

[1] This letter also appeared in the *TLS* of 11 Dec 1943 (595).

[2] The English poet Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) had died on 10 Mar. TSE corresponded with him beginning in 1930, mainly about Binyon's translations of Dante, about which TSE was

enthusiastic. In the early 1940s, TSE sought to publish a selection of Binyon's poems but was refused permission by his regular publisher, Macmillan. On 24 Nov 1943, TSE thanked Binyon's widow for a copy of his posthumously published *Paradiso*: "It is, I feel sure, the best verse translation in existence. I am very much touched by his acknowledgment in his preface to myself for what were very minor suggestions, and I felt sufficiently honoured at the time by his wishing to consult me at all."

3. Binyon composed "For the Fallen" (1914) in response to the heavy British losses early in World War I. Under the title "Ode of Remembrance," the poem's third and fourth stanzas became a staple in annual services commemorating the war dead.

4. Binyon was a graduate of Trinity College, Oxford.

The Virgil Society

To the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*

The Times Literary Supplement (18 Dec 1943) 607

Sir, – The purpose of the Virgil Society is to bring together those men and women everywhere who are united in cherishing the central educational tradition of Western Europe.[1] Among such persons the love of the poetry of Virgil is most likely to be found; and for such persons he is the fitting symbol of that tradition. Virgil is the poet who has been most studied and loved, uninterruptedly through the centuries which divide him from our own; he is the witness to the continuity of our civilization; among Roman poets he is the one whose work has always been the most appropriate within the Christian educational frame.

He is not only the symbol of continuous tradition: he himself, as a poet, was engaged in the very activity which this society aims to undertake. He sought to bring home to the Romans of his day that they were the heirs of a great tradition; that a people with a great past is a people with great responsibilities which should look to a great future; and he saw that the time of Rome's imperial activity was also a time of growing corruption of morals and manners at the centre, which threatened to vitiate the Roman character and policy. He sought to remind his fellow-countrymen of their pristine virtues, and to recall the urban population to the love of the land as the nursery of Roman strength.

The Virgil Society already includes in its company leading Virgilian scholars both in and outside the academic world. But its main appeal is not to the professional student; it is to all who are anxious to preserve the educational tradition which the study of Virgil represents, to respect special knowledge and competence, and to honour quality rather than numbers: these concerns are essential to our purpose. Those who share the convictions and aims of the society, even though they have little or no Latin and have never experienced the great music of the Latin verse, should be among our members.

It is our intention that the society shall have branches throughout the country, with local secretaries, united through the general secretary.

Members of these local branches will then have the opportunity of hearing from time to time addresses and papers in support of the ideas which the society has been founded to uphold. We believe that these local branches will, in varying degrees of strength and numbers, play an important part in the intellectual life of the country, in reversing the present descent to vulgarization of taste and debasement of standards.

Full particulars of membership of the Virgil Society may be obtained from either of the Hon. Secretaries – Mr. W. F. J. Knight, University College of the South-West, Exeter, or Mr. Wilfrid Woollen, 6, Egerton Gardens, Ealing, London, W.13.[2]

Yours, &c.,
H. E. BUTLER, T. S. ELIOT,
J. W. MACKAIL, [ALEXANDER] MONCRIEFF,
R. W. MOORE, V. SACKVILLE-WEST, R. SPEAIGHT[3]

NOTES

1. On TSE's role in the founding of the Virgil Society see the headnote to the advertisement he drafted (6.386).

2. W. F. Jackson Knight (1895-1964), classical scholar and author of *Roman Vergil* (Faber, 1943), was a founding member of the Society and agreed to serve as Joint Honorary Secretary with Wilfrid Woollen (1888-1960). The present letter was drafted by Knight and presumably revised by TSE, who told Society treasurer E. C. Gedge on 11 Nov, "If I were to sign the statement drawn up by him . . . I should want to make some alterations." His primary concern was that the plans Knight wished to announce for the Society were exceedingly ambitious.

Writing to Gedge on 24 Nov, TSE advised that the letter be sent to the *TLS* rather than the *Times*, because – as he had told her on 11 Nov – his name had recently appeared so frequently there that the editors would probably delay publication. Together with an advertisement for the Society (6.814), the letter was sent to the *TLS* on 3 Dec. The letter was also included in the special Virgil Society edition of TSE's presidential address, "What Is a Classic?" (6.685-86, n.1).

3. Robert Speaight quotes a portion of this letter and provides an account of the founding dinner at Brown's Hotel on 11 Jan 1943 in *The Property Basket: Recollections of a Divided Life* (London: Collins & Harvill, 1970), 227-28.

Homage to Virgil

The Times Literary Supplement (18 Dec 1943) 607

There are excellent reasons why the Virgil Society should receive the support for which it asks in the letter on the opposite page.[1] All the older Europe has been bred up on Virgil; by an accident of history Virgil has always had a wider constituency than Homer; and by his priority in time he is more cosmopolitan than Shakespeare. Like Cicero, who is, in spite of the Greeks before him, the father of European prose, Virgil is the true father of European poetry – as much the poet *par excellence*, even now, as he was to Dante; as much poetry itself as Italian painting is painting. He taught first his countrymen and after them aspirants in many languages the grand style; his influence pervades nearly all the more serious poetry since, or pervaded it until quite lately. The nobler poets of at least five nations owe an incalculable debt to him. He was almost the first of poets to compose a poem not on wars, "hitherto the only argument," but on peace and on the only peaceful industry known to his world – agriculture, thus creating the best poet's best poem, according to Dryden.[2] Of late years some rather hard things have been said of the *Aeneid*; but they matter not. Epic is not now fashionable, and it is not difficult to see defects in the *Aeneid*; it never received its author's finishing touches, and to some readers it may always appear to leave off rather than conclude. But such shortcomings are nothing after 2,000 years during which its music, its sheer poetry of sound has enchanted all ears open to it.

Virgil's music would alone make him a standard for those who care for the higher possibilities of human speech; the schools of Europe will drop him only to their impoverishment. But he has other claims on the world. He is one of the most valuable common possessions of a distracted humanity. The "chastest and the royallest" poet[3] – those epithets stand – had, pre-eminently among the ancients, the *anima naturaliter Christiana*,[4] as others besides those of the Roman obedience have always recognized. He had a heart of charity, like Shakespeare, and unlike noisy romantics of large reputation. Charity and egoism do not go together; and more poets have been egoistic than charitable. Virgil knew tears as the familiars of mortality; and he had an extraordinary sympathy with all that draws breath. Yet he wore not his heart on his sleeve; the core of his thought and sensibility has to be sought for and found here and there in scattered lines and phrases though of an unforgettable stamp. It is vain to try to translate Virgil, though it may be one of the wholesomest of occupations; but never vain to read him, to cite him, or to recommend him to others. Without exaggeration it would be difficult to name a more civilizing influence. Tennyson's magnificent address to him still sums up, it is to be hoped, the educated English attitude towards him;[5] while for those to whom faith, hope and charity are the cardinal virtues, the longing words, put centuries ago into the mouth of St. Paul, continue to hold good:

In thy lifetime come upon thee,
Unto what had I not won thee,
Mightiest of poets all![6]

NOTES

1. This unsigned advertisement for the Virgil Society was co-authored by TSE and Douglas Woodruff and edited by TSE to accompany a letter signed by members (6.812). TSE submitted his original draft of the leaflet to the Society's founder, Rev. Bruno James, on 10 Apr (6.386). Woodruff wrote another draft independently. "I am not clear whether the Council wish to have separate statements for the leaflet and for the letter to *The Times*," TSE wrote to Woodruff on 21 Apr, "but I think that yours is on the whole better for both purposes." He then combined the two to produce a new draft for review by the Council.

Asked for another copy, TSE informed Society treasurer E. C. Gedge on 19 Oct that "I do not seem to have kept any copy of my second draft. . . . [M]ay I suggest that you write to [Rev. James] and ask him to let you have the copy of Woodruff's draft and my second version. If these are not forthcoming, we shall have to start all over again which means that I shall have to draw up something and discuss it with Woodruff." Failing to hear from James or Woodruff, TSE wrote to Gedge on 11 Nov, "I may have to reduce the general matter and give the whole thing a more epistolary form, and certainly an important paragraph, that which is to tell the readers what they ought to do about it, has not yet been written." The final draft and the Society letter were sent to the *TLS* on 3 Dec. Elected president for 1943-44, TSE would give the first annual presidential address, "What Is a Classic?" on 16 Oct 1944 (6.669).

2. In a dedicatory epistle for his translation of the *Georgics*, Dryden tells the Earl of Chesterfield, his patron, "At last this happy occasion offer'd, of presenting to you the best poem of the best poet" (*The Poetical Works of John Dryden* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909], 441).

3. From Francis Bacon's "Mr. Bacon's Discourse in the Praise of his Sovereign," Queen Elizabeth, in which he refers to Virgil, and afterwards quotes verses from him, stating: "For the beauty and many graces of her presence, what colours are fine enough for such a portraiture? Let no light poet be used for such a description, but the chastest and the royalest" (*The Works of Francis Bacon*, Vol 3 [London: Henry Bryer, 1803], 34).

4. Tertullian (*Apologeticus* 17.6): naturally Christian soul; soul by nature Christian. Theodor Haecker's *Virgil, Father of the West* (1934) – which TSE had attempted to publish (see 6.735, n.9) – uses this phrase as a chapter title.

5. "To Virgil, Written at the Request of the Mantuans for the Nineteenth Centenary of Virgil's Death" (1882).

6. There is a tradition that in 60 or 62 AD St. Paul visited the tomb of Virgil, who died on 21 Sept 19 BC, near Naples. The quoted lines are translated from the second stanza of a song sung at the Mass of St. Paul, in which he is portrayed grieving at the tomb: "quem te inquit reddidissem, / si te vivum invenissem / poetarum maxime." See Sir Robert Falconer, "St. Paul at the Tomb of Virgil," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 6 (1936), 18-32. Falconer translates the lines loosely: "had I but met thee face to face, / blest wouldst thou be in Paradise, / poet without a peer" (18).

Ruined City Churches: Preservation as Memorials

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (15 Aug 1944) 5

Sir, – We should like to invite your attention to a proposal first advocated, we believe, by the *Architectural Review*, that a few of our bomb-damaged churches should be preserved in their ruined condition, as permanent memorials of this war.[1] Already the authors of "A Plan for Plymouth" have taken up this idea to the extent of selecting the ruined church which, they feel, would be "a fitting memorial to symbolize the city's grief . . ." and on April 28 your correspondence columns contained a specific suggestion for London.[2]

There will probably be a wide measure of agreement that many of the memorials put up after the last war were unworthy of the men whose sacrifice they commemorate. That a vast gulf of feeling should have lain between the experience and the memorials was in any case inevitable. In this war conditions have been different. England has itself been in the battle and London is still in it. Could there be a more appropriate memorial of the nation's crisis than the preservation of fragments of its battleground?

It is proposed that the work on the selected ruins themselves should be confined to the minimum essential to preserve them from further decay, but that they should be surrounded by lawns, flower-beds and flowering trees, with seats for those in search of quietness and rest. The churches themselves would in many cases also permit the use for open-air services in the summer months, for which the climate of this country is far more favourable than is sometimes supposed. Thus, in addition to commemoration of this war's dead through the preservation of a few tangible fragments of distinction, we should be able to provide in some measure for the needs of our successors for spiritual refreshment and physical and mental relaxation.

If the general proposal which we are advocating is accepted, the question which are the most appropriate ruined churches to preserve should at once be faced. The final choice, will, of course, rest with the church authorities and the appropriate committees. It is hoped that the Fine

Arts Commission will also be consulted. Those churches which have not been too severely damaged will no doubt be restored. Others, more seriously injured, will in many cases be restored too, on account of their local or national prestige. But others again have been so far destroyed that their restoration could be nothing more than a mockery of their former selves. Such churches must either be removed altogether or remain as ruins. If the former course were too widely adopted we believe that a potent source of emotional experience would be lost to future generations.

The time will come – much sooner than most of us to-day can visualize – when no trace of death from the air will be left in the streets of rebuilt London. At such a time the story of the Blitz may begin to seem unreal not only to visiting tourists but to a new generation of Londoners. It is the purpose of war memorials to remind posterity of the reality upon which its apparent security has been built. These church ruins, we suggest, would do this with realism and gravity. While being kept as gardens suitable for meditation or relaxation, in the heart of the city, each could act at the same time as a specific memorial, one to the seamen of the convoys, another to men of the 8th Army, a third to the air crews of the R.A.F, a fourth to the women in the services, a fifth to a regiment: the names of the fallen being inscribed on their ruined stones. And in the City of London one church at least should be set aside for a memorial to the thousands of Londoners who died in the blitz for whom those walls of calcined stone were once not monuments, but tombs.[3]

Yours faithfully,
MARJORY ALLEN OF HURTWOOD, DAVID CECIL,
KENNETH CLARK, F. A. COCKIN, T. S. ELIOT,
H. S. GOODHART-RENDEL, JULIAN HUXLEY,
[MAYNARD] KEYNES, F. J. SALISBURY

August 12

NOTES

1. An editorial titled "Save Us Our Ruins" appeared in the *Architectural Review*, 95 (Jan 1944), proposing "that a few of the bombed churches of Britain be selected to remain with us as ruins, essentially in the state in which the bombing has left them, that they be laid out and planted appropriately, and that they be regarded as permanent places of open-air worship, meditation, and recreation, as national war memorials of this war and focal points of picturesque delight in the planned surroundings of the post-war world." The editorial was accompanied by a "Foreword" by the Dean of St. Paul's, W. R. Matthews. "The devastation of war," he wrote, "has given us an opportunity which will never come again. If we do not make a City of London

worthy of the spirit of those who fought the Battle of Britain and the Battle of London, posterity will rise and curse us for unimaginative fools" (13). The "Foreword" was then reprinted with this letter and its signatories in *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* (Cheam: Architectural Press, 1945), 3-4.

2. On 27 Apr 1944, under the heading "A Plan for Plymouth / Old and New in the Making of a Modern City," the *Times* described the city council's plans for the renovation of Old Plymouth: "Prominent at the entrance to this precinct will stand the church of Charles, the ruins of which, the authors suggest, 'should be considered as a fitting memorial to symbolize the city's grief and honour in the triumphant survival of the trials of this tragic war'" (5). Dedicated to King Charles I and consecrated in 1665, the Charles Church was destroyed by bombing on 21 Mar 1941; conservation work on the open-air ruins and garden began in 1952 as a memorial to Plymouth's 1,200 war dead.

In a letter to the editor of the *Times* of 28 Apr, under the heading "Plymouth's Example," H. R. Shaw wrote to suggest that London follow Plymouth in leaving "one of her ruined churches as it stands. Its situation would make St. Clement Danes a specially striking reminder" (5). A Christopher Wren church built in 1682 and gutted during the Blitz on 10 May 1941, St. Clement Danes on the Strand was not restored until 1958 as the Central Church of the Royal Air Force.

3. Kenneth Clark shared a draft of this letter with TSE, who responded on 21 June: "I return your draft letter which I sign with pleasure. It seems to me possible that *The Times* may ask you to shorten it a bit but that is not my affair. I have only two comments to make. The meaning of the final sentence is not quite clear to me. It rather suggests that approximately a thousand people in London have been killed inside churches. Could not it be made a little more directly for people as stupid as myself? The other question in my mind is simply whether this is the most appropriate moment to launch such a suggestion at a time when people are perhaps worrying more about possible destruction than about re-building." The first German V-1 "flying bomb" had hit London on 13 June.

The Freedom Press Raid[1]

To the Editor of *The New Statesman and Nation*

The New Statesman and Nation (3 Mar 1945) 141

Sir, – We desire to express our disquiet at the increasing tendency in England to-day towards the restriction of the liberties of statement and persuasion. This tendency has been demonstrated recently in an instance of arbitrary police action and of other methods of indirect coercion. We refer to the acts against Freedom Press, the anarchist publishing group. Most of us do not subscribe to the political theories held by Freedom Press, and have no connection with the anarchist movement, but we respect their right to propagate opinions, and regard any attempt to curtail their freedom of speech and writing as a general threat against those liberties.[2]

On the 12th December, a squad of the Special Branch raided the premises of Freedom Press, with a search warrant issued under Defence Regulation 39A.[3] This warrant authorised them to seize any objects which they had reason to suppose might be evidence of the commission of an attempt to seduce from their duties members of H.M. Forces. Instead, however, of choosing relevant material the police proceeded to empty the contents from the letter trays straight into sacks, seize invoices and account books which dealt entirely with transactions with bookshops, the office typewriter, the boxes containing stencils of addresses, letter books, and other material without which it is impossible to carry on the legitimate business of such a concern as Freedom Press. No attempt was made to decide whether the material had any bearing on the investigation, and, in spite of protests, it was two months before any of it was returned.

At the same time raids were made on the homes of at least five persons connected with Freedom Press, and in one case on that of a private citizen who had no direct connection with Freedom Press. Personal correspondence, professional notes, literary manuscripts, cheque counterfoils, etc., were all seized, and again the police made no effort to choose papers which might possibly contain relevant evidence. In one case, when the person visited was not at home, the police broke in and departed without leaving any notification of their action. Furthermore, in the Army and Navy, searches were made of the kits of men who had been in correspondence with Freedom

Press, and copies of pamphlets, as well as issues of *War Commentary*, *Peace News* and *Now* were seized.[4]

These official actions have been accompanied by certain unofficial actions which have no obvious connection with the activities of the police, but which deserve attention. The landlords of the premises occupied by Freedom Press forbade them to carry on business any longer. Negotiations were opened for further premises, but at the last minute were broken off by the owners, who refused to give any reasons for their action. Lastly, Freedom Press have been informed by the paper manufacturers that they cannot supply any more newsprint.

We submit that such actions are prejudicial to the liberty of speech and writing. If they are allowed to pass without protest, they may become precedents for future persecutions of individuals or of organisations devoted to the spreading of opinions disliked by the authorities. Once started, a process of this nature may well result in an intellectual tyranny of an extreme kind. As writers, we see that in our own interests, as well as in the interests of freedom of expression and persuasion, we must register our protest against the high-handed actions of the authorities in this case. In particular, we protest against the facility with which search warrants are granted to the police, and the improper manner in which the police exceed the authority given them by these warrants, in such a way as to interfere with the legitimate action of the organisations and individuals whose premises they search. We suggest that an inquiry be made into the activities of the Special Branch, which in its present form appears to be an institution of great potential danger to freedom in this country.[5]

ALEX COMFORT, HERBERT READ,
T. S. ELIOT, REGINALD REYNOLDS,
E. M. FORSTER, D. S. SAVAGE,
ETHEL MANNIN, STEPHEN SPENDER,
JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY, JULIAN SYMONS

NOTES

1. This letter, dated 23 Feb 1945, was also published in the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, the *Spectator* (edited and reduced), *Common Wealth Review*, *Peace News*, and *War Commentary*; in the US it appeared in *View: The Modern Magazine*.

2. The Freedom Press and its anarchist paper *Freedom* were founded in 1886. In 1936 they came under the direction and editorship of Vernon Richards (Vero Recchioni, 1915-2001), an Anglo-Italian anarchist, with offices in Whitechapel in London's East End.

3. After their arrest on 22 Feb 1945, Richards, his wife Marie Louise Berneri (1918-49), and their colleagues Dr. John Hewetson (1913-90) and Philip Sansom (1916-99) were charged with conspiracy to contravene Defence Regulation 39A by attempting to cause disaffection among members of His Majesty's forces by disseminating ideas that might incite them to breaches of duty or desertion. On 26 Apr the three men were convicted and sentenced to nine months in prison. Protest meetings were held by the Freedom Press Defence Committee, organized in Mar 1945, chaired by Herbert Read and including two signatories of the present letter, Ethel Mannin and Reginald Reynolds: "We will fight: fight the Defence Regulations and that foul and un-English institution, the political police." The Committee remained active until 1949.

4. The anarchist periodical *War Commentary* (1939-45) was a continuation of *Spain and the World* (1936-38), a newspaper founded by Richards. Both *War Commentary* and the Freedom Press were supported by a group called the Anarchist Federation. *Peace News* was the pacifist paper of the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) (5.384, n.1). The pacifist-anarchist paper *Now* was founded by the Canadian author and anarchist George Woodcock (1912-95). The Freedom Press published three of his books – *Anarchy or Chaos* in 1944, and *Anarchism and Morality* and *What Is Anarchy?* in 1945 – and he served as secretary of the Freedom Press Defence Committee.

5. TSE telegraphed Herbert Read on 21 Feb with reference to this appeal: "YOU MAY INCLUDE MY SIGNATURE TO LETTER." However, when Read later informed him that the Freedom Press group wanted to reframe the argument, TSE replied on 25 Feb, "If the anarchists want to alter that letter so as to evade the appeal to legality, I withdraw: one doesn't give one's signature to a letter which is going to undergo major alterations afterwards." Since the "appeal to legality" as well as TSE's endorsement remained, his view may be assumed to have prevailed.

Professor Saurat

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (13 June 1945) 5

Sir, – According to your recent report of the luncheon at the Savoy at which the dissolution of the Council of the Institut Français was publicly announced, no reference appears to have been made, on that occasion, to the services rendered by Professor Denis Saurat.[1] It was gratifying to know that the British Council received recognition of its generosity to a good cause during the war years: for without the financial help of the British Council the French Institute could not have survived. But without the efforts of Professor Saurat throughout that period it is unlikely that there would have been an Institute to support. In August, 1940, everyone expected the Institute to close down, since no lecturers could be brought from France. During the whole of the Blitz, Professor Saurat gave two lectures a week at the Institute, and it was only much later that he was able to find other lecturers.

M. Saurat has other claims upon the gratitude of the British people: as tenant of the French chair of language and literature at the University of London, and for his published works – in particular his *Milton* and his *Blake*, which have an important place in the bibliography of these poets.[2] Recognition for these services can wait, for we trust that he will continue to teach and to write for many years to come. But we fear that his services as head of the Institut Français, and especially during a most difficult period, may be forgotten; and it is for this reason that we wish to call attention to them at this time.

Your obedient servants,
HUGH KINGSMILL[3]
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The report appeared in the *Times* of 16 May under the heading "French Culture in Britain / Future of Institut Français," stating that the French ambassador René Massigli, who traced the history of the Institut from its foundation in 1910, "expressed sincere thanks to the British Council for the financial and other aid . . . and to the leaders of the Institut's council for their

constant devotion" (2). Saurat directed the Institut in South Kensington from 1924 to its close, when he resumed his professorship in French and literature at King's College London, which he held from 1926 to 1950.

2. Saurat's books include *Milton, Man and Thinker* (1925), *Milton and Materialism* (1928), and *Blake and Modern Thought* (1929).

3. The English writer Hugh Kingsmill [Lunn] (1889-1949) corresponded with TSE in early 1945 out of a shared concern for Saurat's livelihood.

Telegram to President Harry S. Truman

The existence of this telegram, dated 1 May 1946, was reported by the Associated Press on 24 June, after the American writer Dorothy Canfield Fisher (1879-1958), chair of the American Amnesty Committee, distributed it in a press release. The Committee pointed out "that 2100 conscientious objectors, out of 6000 sentenced since 1940, are still held in Federal prisons, while only 26 remain in British Prisons."

Fisher later asked TSE to sign a similar amnesty letter, but on 8 Aug he demurred, explaining that he had already endorsed "an appeal made by people in this country some three months ago and I believe that this appeal was cabled to President Truman. It was made under the auspices of the Freedom Defence Committee." Although he thought it inappropriate to sign a second such appeal – particularly "a specifically American letter for American signatories" – he closed "With warm sympathy." On the Freedom Defence Committee, originally the Freedom Press Defence Committee, see "The Freedom Press Raid" (6.822, n.3).

The telegram is in the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (Harry S. Truman Papers, Official File, OF #111, Conscientious Objectors).

SIR WE VIEW WITH CONCERN THE CONTINUED IMPRISONMENT UNDER HEAVY SENTENCES OF THREE THOUSAND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS IN YOUR COUNTRY AND WISH TO ASSOCIATE OUR NAMES WITH THE PETITIONS WHICH WE UNDERSTAND ARE BEING SENT TO YOU BY AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS AND CITIZENS STOP WE WOULD ASK RESPECTFULLY IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE NOW THAT THE WAR HAS ENDED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SENTENCES IMPOSED ON THESE MEN TO BE COMMUTED BY A GENERAL AMNESTY AND WOULD POINT OUT IN SUPPORT OF OUR REQUEST THAT ALMOST ALL CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS HAVE NOW BEEN RELEASED FROM BRITISH PRISONS STOP ALTHOUGH AFFAIRS IN YOUR COUNTRY MAY NOT STRICTLY CONCERN US WE FEEL OBLIGED TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS ON WHAT SEEMS TO US A HARSH TREATMENT OF THESE MEN AND HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU WILL BE GLAD TO BE INFORMED OF OPINIONS ON THIS MATTER IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN YOUR OWN STOP

RESPECTFULLY

GERALD BRENAN, BENJAMIN BRITTEN, FENNER BROCKWAY,
RHYS J. DAVIES, T. S. ELIOT, [GAVIN HENDERSON, 2ND BARON]
FARINGDON, E. M. FORSTER, B. H. LIDDELL HART, LAURENCE
HOUSMAN, C. E. M. JOAD, AUGUSTUS JOHN, ARTHUR
KOESTLER, ETHEL MANNIN, JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY,
GEORGE ORWELL, BERTRAND RUSSELL, G. BERNARD SHAW,
EDITH SITWELL, OSBERT SITWELL, MICHAEL TIPPETT,
GAMEL WOOLSEY

LONDON

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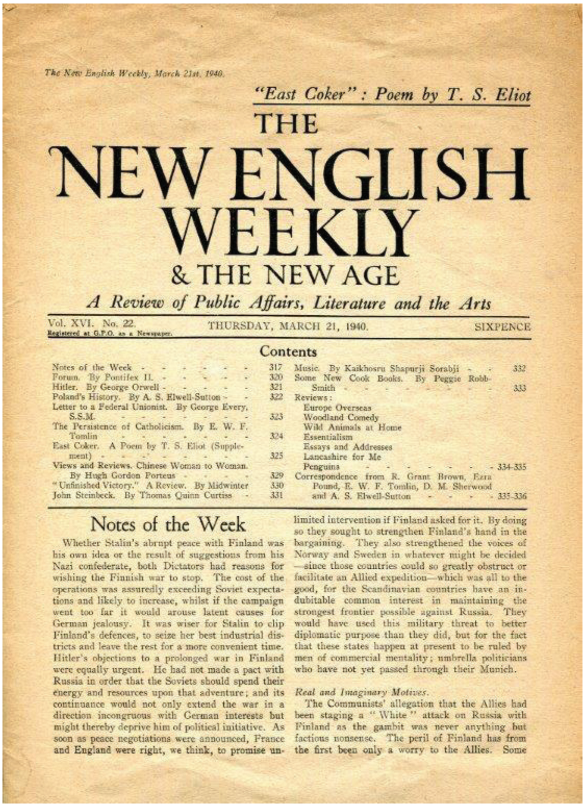
1. Eliot in Stockholm, lecturing for the British Council in Apr–May 1942, with further lectures and readings in Uppsala, Lund, and Gothenburg. Jarlos Photo; © Ahlen & Akerlind Studio, Stockholm



The New English Weekly, March 21st, 1940.

"East Coker" : Poem by T. S. Eliot

THE
NEW ENGLISH
WEEKLY
& THE NEW AGE

A Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts

Vol. XVI. No. 22.
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THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1940.
SIXPENCE

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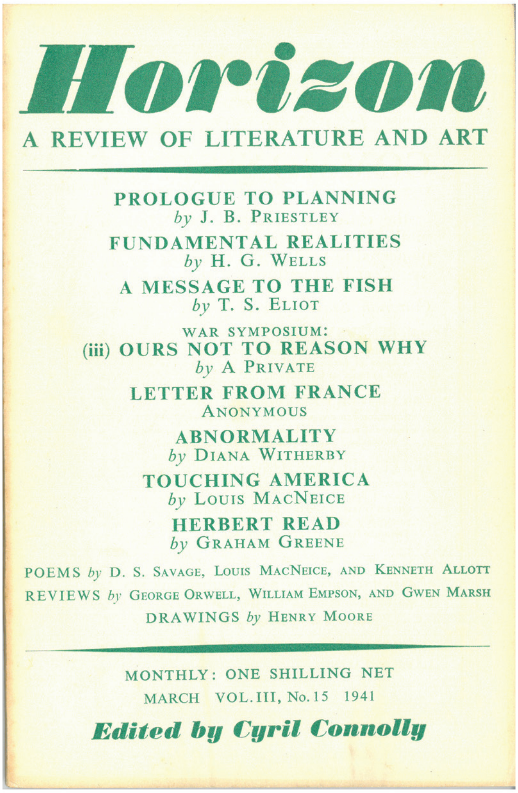
Notes of the Week

Whether Stalin's abrupt peace with Finland was his own idea or the result of suggestions from his Nazi confederate, both Dictators had reasons for wishing the Finnish war to stop. The cost of the operations was assuredly exceeding Soviet expectations and likely to increase, whilst if the campaign went too far it would arouse latent causes for German jealousy. It was wiser for Stalin to clip Finland's defences, to seize her best industrial districts and leave the rest for a more convenient time. Hitler's objections to a prolonged war in Finland were equally urgent. He had not made a pact with Russia in order that the Soviets should spend their energy and resources upon that adventure; and its continuance would not only extend the war in a direction incongruous with German interests but might thereby deprive him of political initiative. As soon as peace negotiations were announced, France and England were right, we think, to promise unlimited intervention if Finland asked for it. By doing so they sought to strengthen Finland's hand in the bargaining. They also strengthened the voices of Norway and Sweden in whatever might be decided —since those countries could so greatly obstruct or facilitate an Allied expedition—which was all to the good, for the Scandinavian countries have an indubitable common interest in maintaining the strongest frontier possible against Russia. They would have used this military threat to better diplomatic purpose than they did, but for the fact that these states happen at present to be ruled by men of commercial mentality; umbrella politicians who have not yet passed through their Munich.

Real and Imaginary Motives.

The Communists' allegation that the Allies had been staging a " White " attack on Russia with Finland as the gambit was never anything but factious nonsense. The peril of Finland has from the first been only a worry to the Allies. Some

2. Cover of The New English Weekly, *to which Eliot contributed commentaries and reviews after the closing of* The Criterion *in 1939 and in which appeared the first printings of* East Coker, The Dry Salvages, *and* Little Gidding



Horizon

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by H. G. WELLS

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by T. S. ELIOT

WAR SYMPOSIUM:
(iii) OURS NOT TO REASON WHY
by A PRIVATE

LETTER FROM FRANCE
ANONYMOUS

ABNORMALITY
by DIANA WITHERBY

TOUCHING AMERICA
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REVIEWS *by* GEORGE ORWELL, WILLIAM EMPSON, AND GWEN MARSH
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MONTHLY: ONE SHILLING NET
MARCH VOL. III, No. 15 1941

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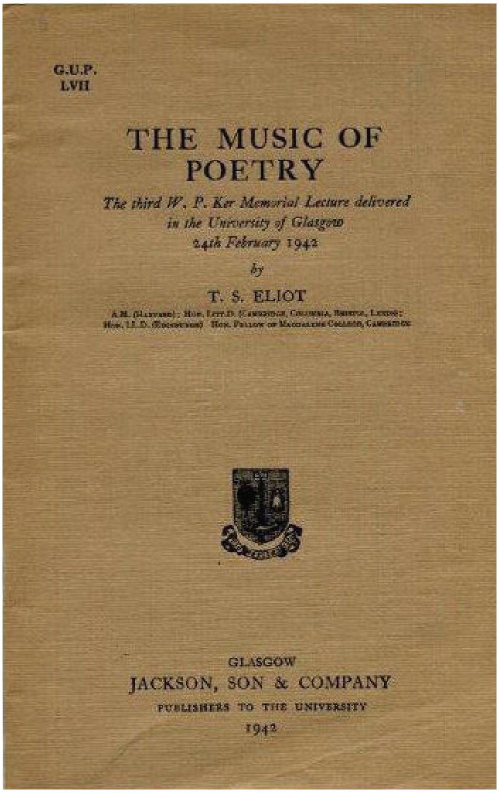

G.U.P.
LVII

THE MUSIC OF
POETRY

The third W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture delivered
in the University of Glasgow
24th February 1942
by
T. S. ELIOT
A.M. (HARVARD); HON. LITT.D. (CAMBRIDGE, COLUMBIA, BRISTOL, LEEDS);
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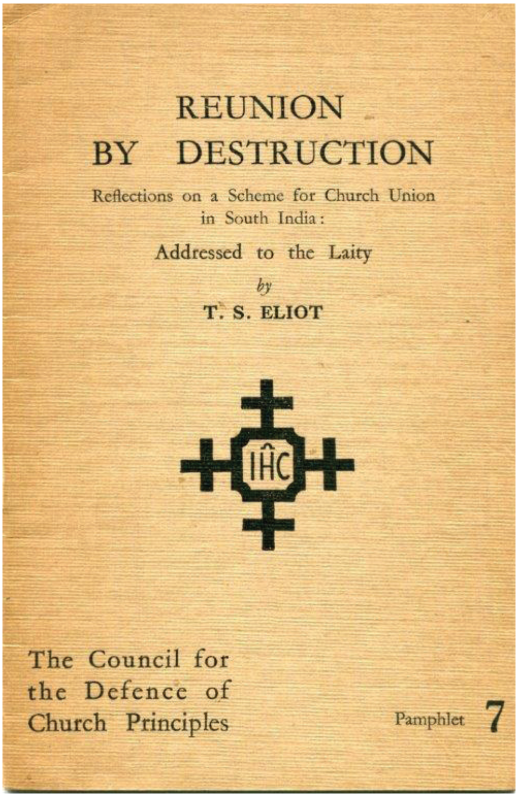


REUNION
BY DESTRUCTION

Reflections on a Scheme for Church Union
in South India:

Addressed to the Laity
by
T. S. ELIOT

IHC

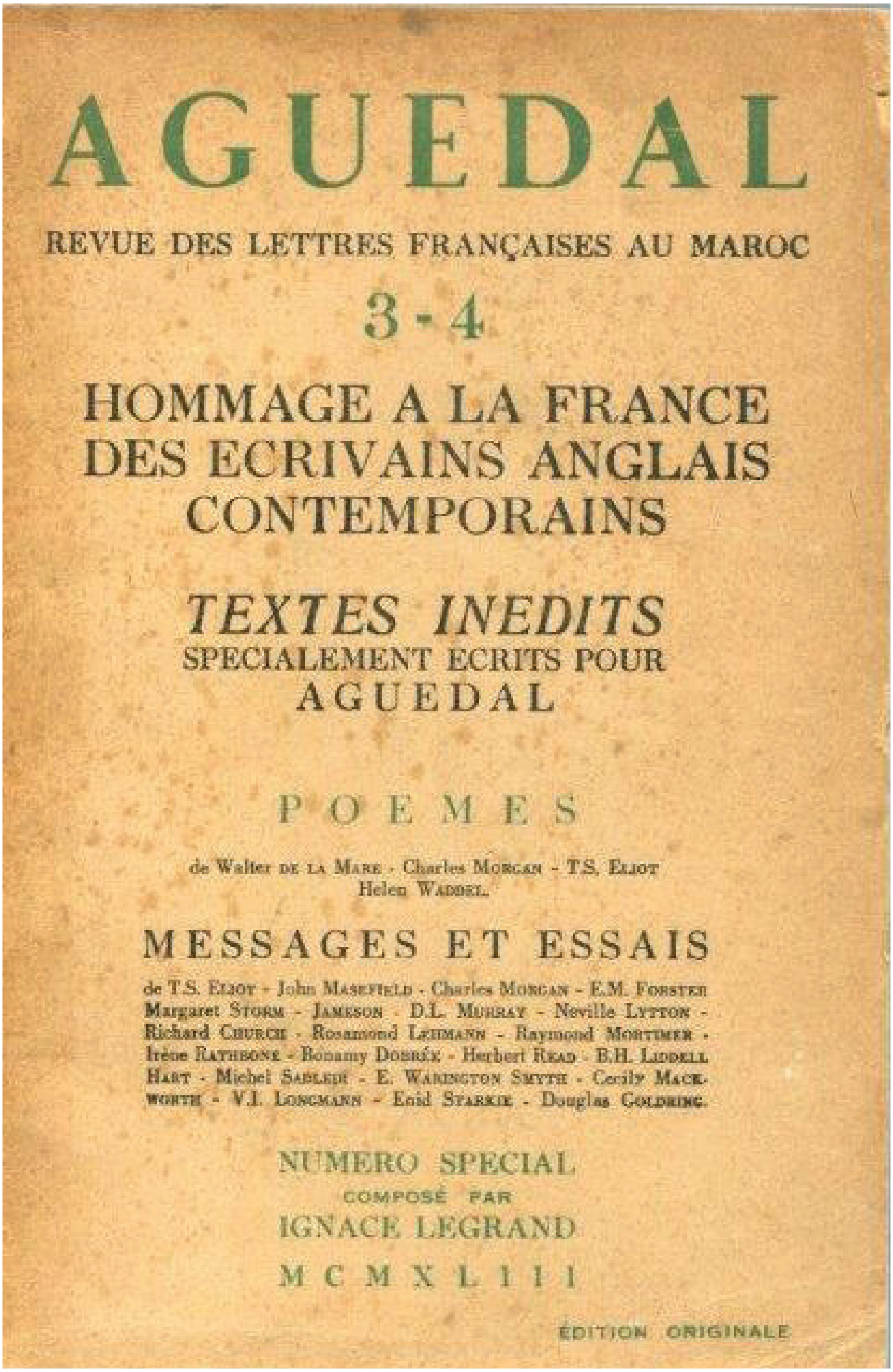
The Council for
the Defence of
Church Principles

Pamphlet 7

3. *Cover of* Horizon, *containing Eliot's "Message to the Fish," a printing of his letter, rejected by* The Times, *critical of an obituary of James Joyce, together with a more forceful letter criticizing* The Times *for printing an obituary that "may be used as evidence by those who choose to believe that England has lost respect for that one of the arts for which it has been chiefly renowned"*

4. The Music of Poetry, *first printing in paper wrappers, Aug 1942, following the lecture on 24 Feb*

5. *Cover of* Reunion by Destruction, *Nov 1943*



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REVUE DES LETTRES FRANÇAISES AU MAROC

3 - 4

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DES ECRIVAINS ANGLAIS
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de Walter de la Mare - Charles Morgan - T.S. Eliot
Helen Waddel.

MESSAGES ET ESSAIS

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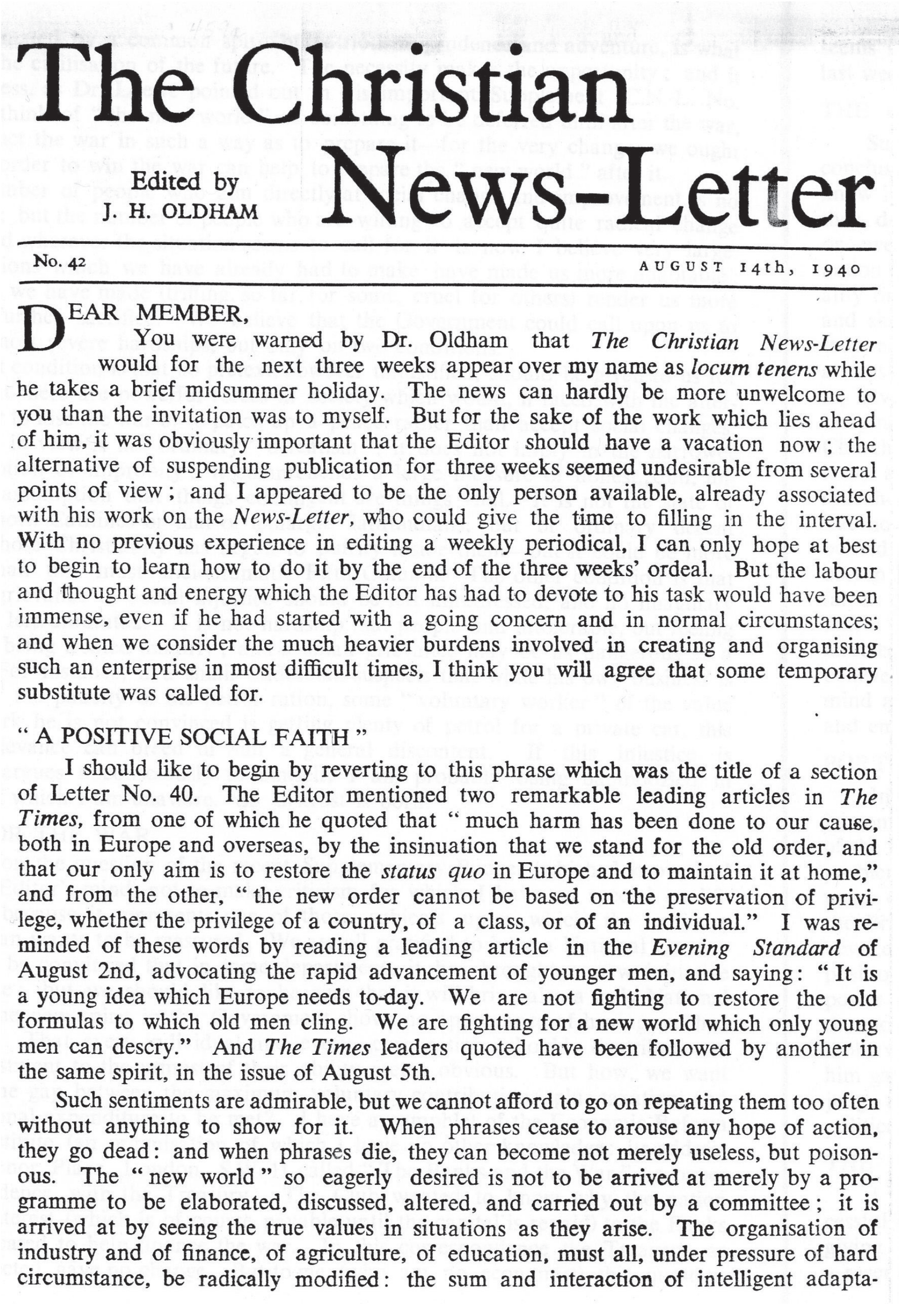
6. Cover of Aguedal*, containing Eliot's "Message" in French and a translation of* Little Gidding *into French by André Gide and Madeleine Bosco*



The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

No. 42 AUGUST 14th, 1940

DEAR MEMBER,

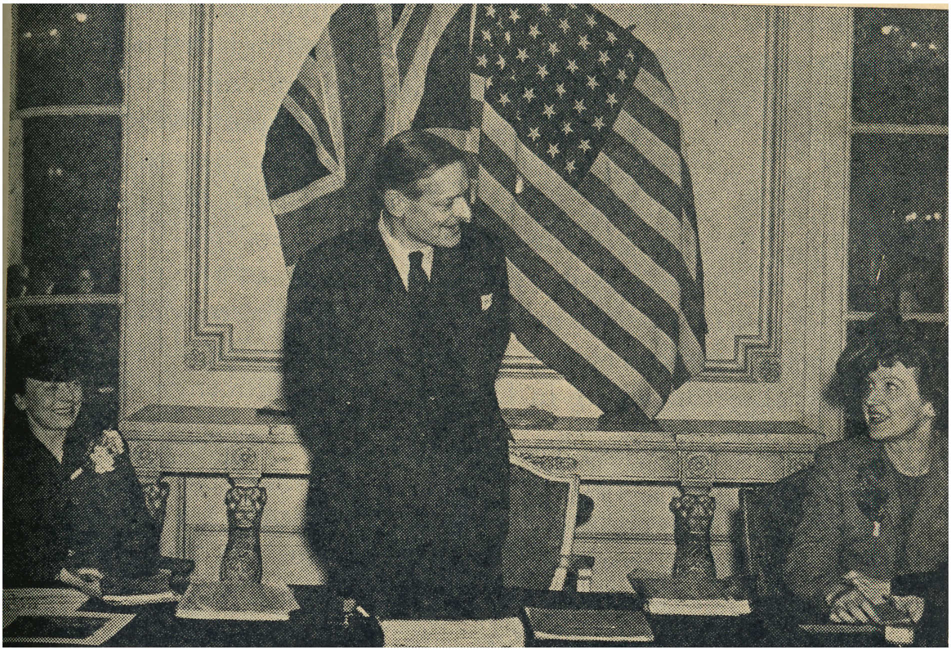
You were warned by Dr. Oldham that *The Christian News-Letter* would for the next three weeks appear over my name as *locum tenens* while he takes a brief midsummer holiday. The news can hardly be more unwelcome to you than the invitation was to myself. But for the sake of the work which lies ahead of him, it was obviously important that the Editor should have a vacation now; the alternative of suspending publication for three weeks seemed undesirable from several points of view; and I appeared to be the only person available, already associated with his work on the *News-Letter,* who could give the time to filling in the interval. With no previous experience in editing a weekly periodical, I can only hope at best to begin to learn how to do it by the end of the three weeks' ordeal. But the labour and thought and energy which the Editor has had to devote to his task would have been immense, even if he had started with a going concern and in normal circumstances; and when we consider the much heavier burdens involved in creating and organising such an enterprise in most difficult times, I think you will agree that some temporary substitute was called for.

" A POSITIVE SOCIAL FAITH "

I should like to begin by reverting to this phrase which was the title of a section of Letter No. 40. The Editor mentioned two remarkable leading articles in *The Times,* from one of which he quoted that " much harm has been done to our cause, both in Europe and overseas, by the insinuation that we stand for the old order, and that our only aim is to restore the *status quo* in Europe and to maintain it at home," and from the other, " the new order cannot be based on the preservation of privilege, whether the privilege of a country, of a class, or of an individual." I was reminded of these words by reading a leading article in the *Evening Standard* of August 2nd, advocating the rapid advancement of younger men, and saying: " It is a young idea which Europe needs to-day. We are not fighting to restore the old formulas to which old men cling. We are fighting for a new world which only young men can descry." And *The Times* leaders quoted have been followed by another in the same spirit, in the issue of August 5th.

Such sentiments are admirable, but we cannot afford to go on repeating them too often without anything to show for it. When phrases cease to arouse any hope of action, they go dead: and when phrases die, they can become not merely useless, but poisonous. The " new world " so eagerly desired is not to be arrived at merely by a programme to be elaborated, discussed, altered, and carried out by a committee; it is arrived at by seeing the true values in situations as they arise. The organisation of industry and of finance, of agriculture, of education, must all, under pressure of hard circumstance, be radically modified: the sum and interaction of intelligent adapta-

7. Cover of The Christian News-Letter, *the first of five issues prepared entirely by Eliot as guest editor*



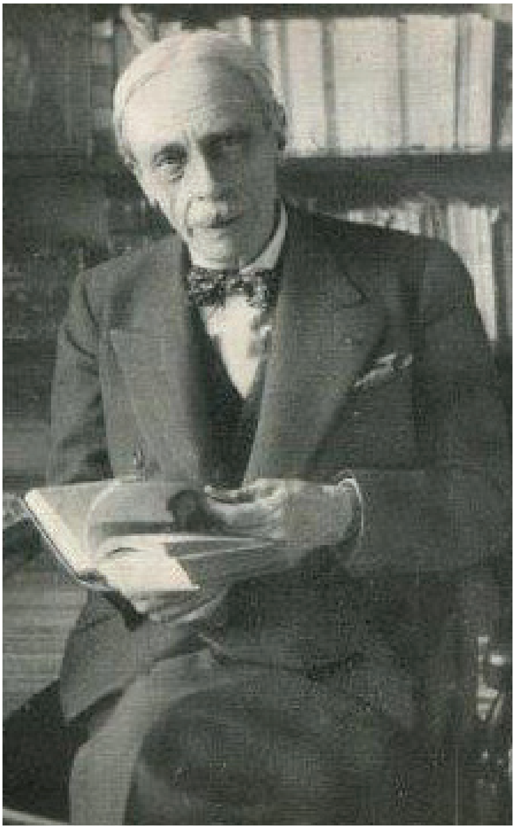
8. Alicia Street, Eliot, and Beatrice Warde at a Books Across the Sea reception; The Horn Book*, Sept 1944*

9. Eliot in his Faber office. Photo by Bill Brandt; Harper's Bazaar*, July 1945*

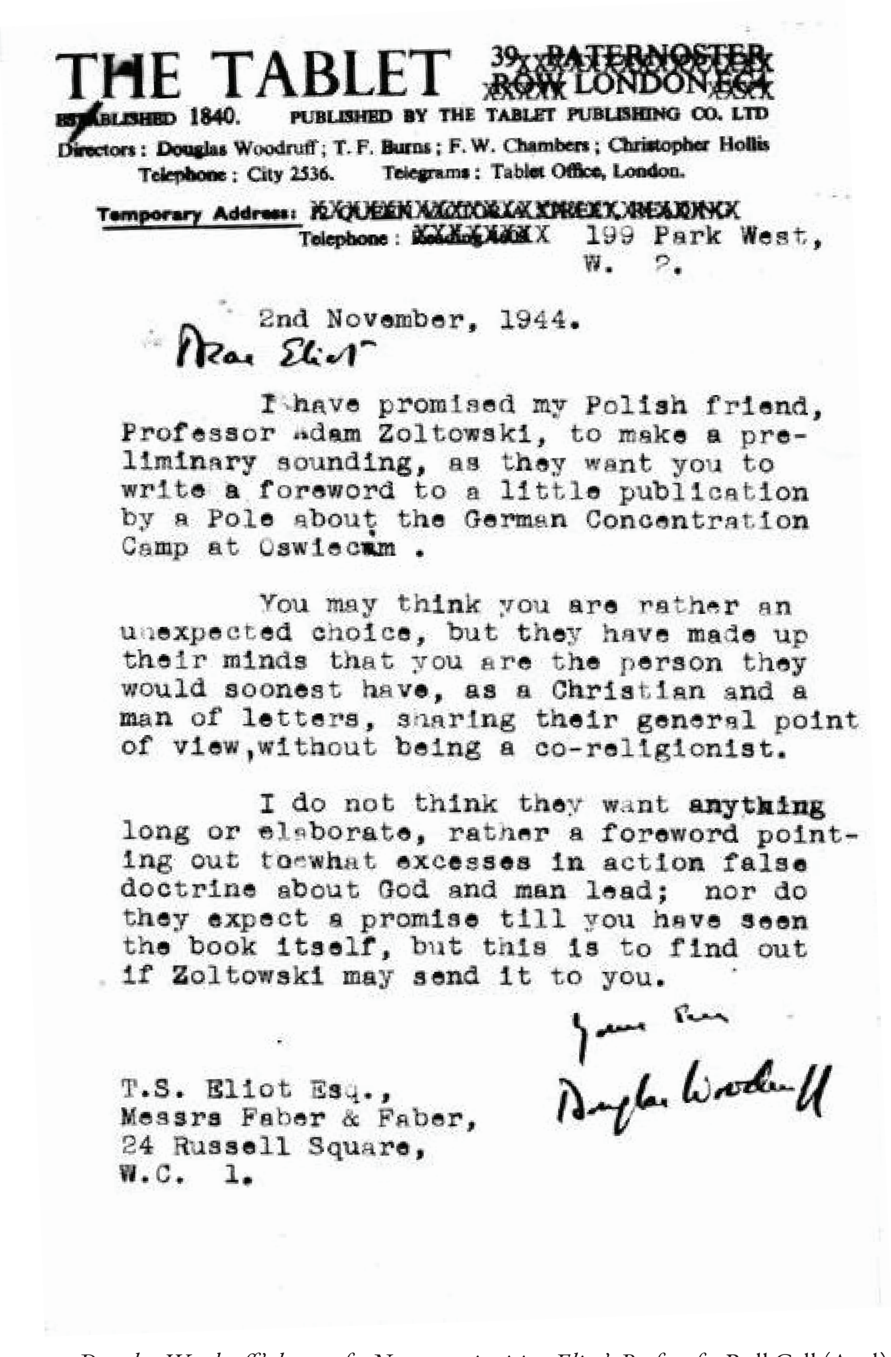
10. J. H. Oldham. Photographer unknown; © World Council of Churches, WCC Archives, TP0535-00

11. Karl Mannheim. Photo by Elliott & Fry, 1943; © National Portrait Gallery

12. Charles Williams, frontispiece for Alice Mary Hadfield's An Introduction to Charles Williams *(1959). Photographer unknown*



13. Paul Valéry, "Automne à Marseille, 1941." Photo by Detaille; in Paul Valéry Vivant *(Cahiers du Sud, 1946), containing Eliot's "Leçon de Valéry"*



THE TABLET 39 ~~PATERNOSTER ROW~~ LONDON ~~E.C.4~~
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W. 2.

2nd November, 1944.

Dear Eliot

I have promised my Polish friend, Professor Adam Zoltowski, to make a preliminary sounding, as they want you to write a foreword to a little publication by a Pole about the German Concentration Camp at Oswiecam .

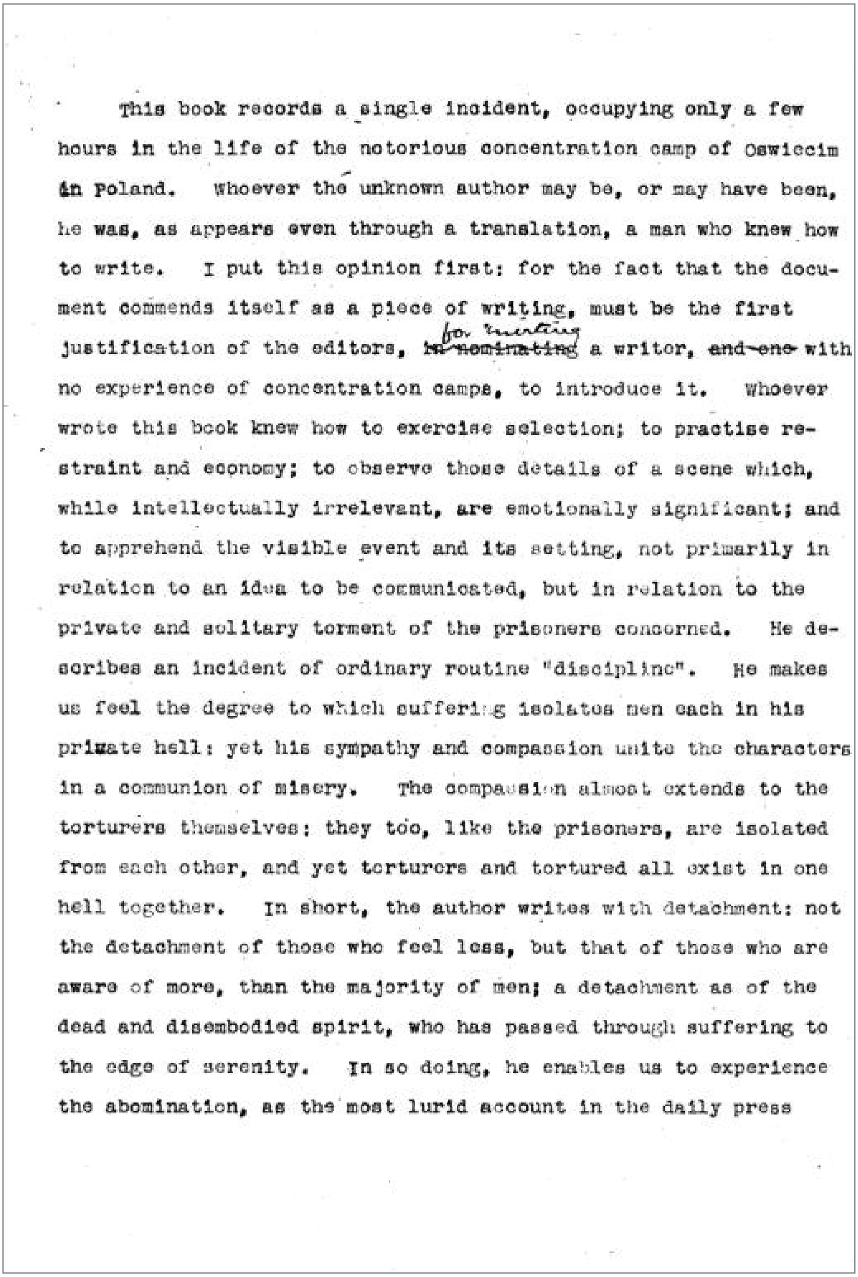
You may think you are rather an unexpected choice, but they have made up their minds that you are the person they would soonest have, as a Christian and a man of letters, sharing their general point of view, without being a co-religionist.

I do not think they want anything long or elaborate, rather a foreword pointing out to what excesses in action false doctrine about God and man lead; nor do they expect a promise till you have seen the book itself, but this is to find out if Zoltowski may send it to you.

Yours ever
Douglas Woodruff

T.S. Eliot Esq.,
Messrs Faber & Faber,
24 Russell Square,
W.C. 1.

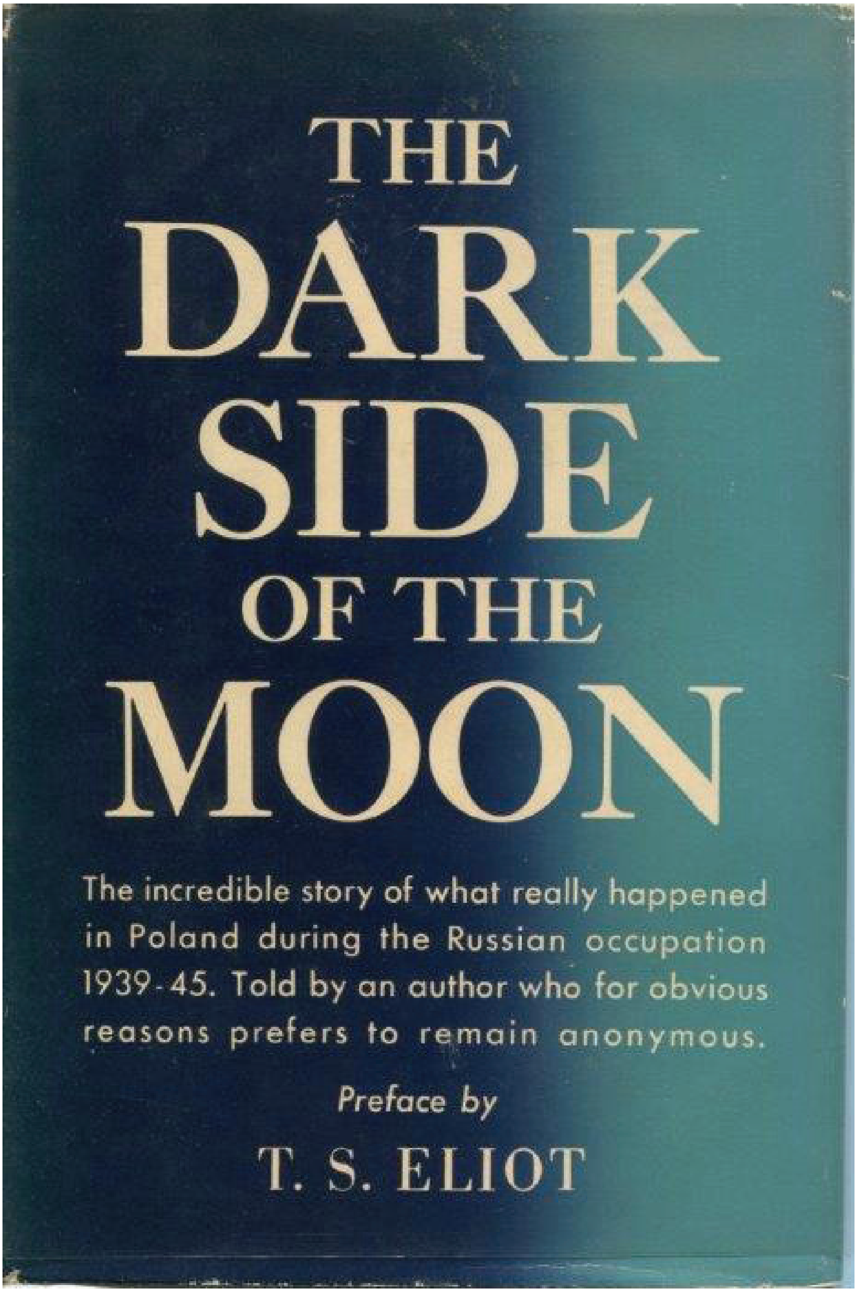
14. Douglas Woodruff's letter of 2 Nov 1944 inviting Eliot's Preface for Roll Call (Apel)



This book records a single incident, occupying only a few hours in the life of the notorious concentration camp of Oswiecim in Poland. Whoever the unknown author may be, or may have been, he was, as appears even through a translation, a man who knew how to write. I put this opinion first: for the fact that the document commends itself as a piece of writing, must be the first justification of the editors, ~~in nominating~~ for inviting a writer, ~~and one~~ with no experience of concentration camps, to introduce it. Whoever wrote this book knew how to exercise selection; to practise restraint and economy; to observe those details of a scene which, while intellectually irrelevant, are emotionally significant; and to apprehend the visible event and its setting, not primarily in relation to an idea to be communicated, but in relation to the private and solitary torment of the prisoners concerned. He describes an incident of ordinary routine "discipline". He makes us feel the degree to which suffering isolates men each in his private hell: yet his sympathy and compassion unite the characters in a communion of misery. The compassion almost extends to the torturers themselves: they too, like the prisoners, are isolated from each other, and yet torturers and tortured all exist in one hell together. In short, the author writes with detachment: not the detachment of those who feel less, but that of those who are aware of more, than the majority of men; a detachment as of the dead and disembodied spirit, who has passed through suffering to the edge of serenity. In so doing, he enables us to experience the abomination, as the most lurid account in the daily press

15. Opening typescript page of Eliot's unpublished Preface to Roll Call (Apel)*, submitted to Professor Adam Żółtowski of the Polish Research Centre, London, on 21 Dec 1944*

16. Jerzy Andrzejewski, author of Roll Call (Apel).
Photograph by Benedykt Jerzy Dorys (1950); © Ludwik Dobrzyński



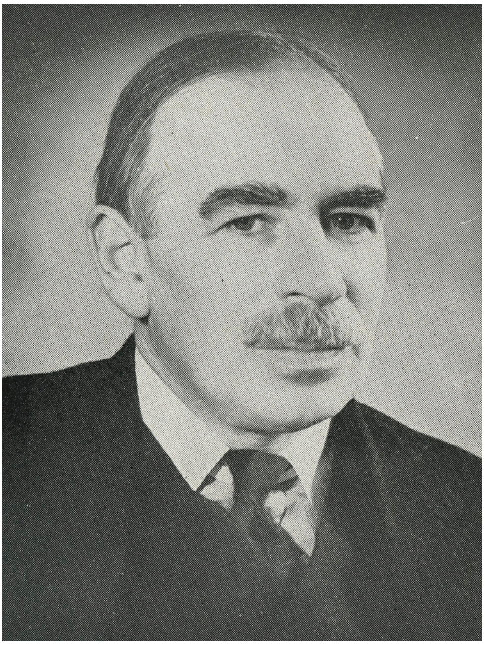
THE
DARK
SIDE
OF THE
MOON

The incredible story of what really happened in Poland during the Russian occupation 1939-45. Told by an author who for obvious reasons prefers to remain anonymous.

Preface by
T. S. ELIOT

17. Dust jacket for the American edition of The Dark Side of the Moon

18. Zoe Zajdlerowa, anonymous author of The Dark Side of the Moon *(1946). Photographer unknown*



19. John Maynard Keynes, frontispiece for Dudley Dillard's The Economics of John Maynard Keynes *(1948). Photographer unknown from British Information Services*